

**A Study of the Ecumenical Nature of Charismatic Renewal:  
with particular reference to Roman Catholic and Anglican  
Charismatic Renewal in England**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

The coming of charismatic renewal in the 1960s brought Pentecostal experience into the historic denominations of the church. From its beginning, there were those who perceived in the charismatic movement an ecumenical quality. Its ability to root across a wide spectrum of traditions, suggested that it might have a significant contribution to make towards the search for the visible unity of the Christian church.

This thesis sets out to explore more precisely the ecumenical dimension of the charismatic movement. It largely focuses on the English Ecumenical scene, where there have been significant ecumenical developments in the last twenty years; but account is also taken of the broader canvas of the World Council of Churches and *Koinonia* ecclesiology.

A special focus is made of the Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal, to see how the movement impacted that church, and was critiqued by its own theologians in the early years of the 1970s. The study looks in some detail at baptism and episcopacy, to see how these traditional ecumenical sticking points could be resolved, when looked at through a charismatic lens. It then moves on to analyse a sample of leaders, who have both experienced charismatic renewal and engaged with it theologically, showing that the personal theological changes are quite significant. Finally the study takes account of where the Charismatic and Ecumenical Movements have reached in their contemporary trajectories; and suggests how the charismatic movement can still make a serious contribution to the search for visible Christian Unity. To do this, attention is still needed in the area of sacramental theology, but in particular to the nature of truth and its revelation through the Spirit. In that connection the thesis includes some samples of fresh biblical exegesis on familiar ecumenically relevant biblical passages.

The study concludes that there is indeed an ecumenical dimension of charismatic renewal. However, before that dimension can forward the visible unity of the whole church, something of a largely lost earlier vision needs to be re-captured. When that has been done, there is hope that both the charismatic and ecumenical movements may discover their natural complementarity and creative engagement.

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## Acronymns and Abbreviations used in this study

ARM Anglican Renewal Ministries

BCC British Council of Churches

BEM Baptism Eucharist and Ministry, WCC 'Lima' Document

CCR Catholic Charismatic Renewal

CCU Council for Christian Unity of the General Synod of the Church of England

CPD (or VPD) Catholic (Vatican) / Pentecostal dialogue

CTBI (CCBI) Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (Council of Churches for BI)

CTBO Called to be One Process.

CTE Churches Together in England

FGBMFI Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International

GS General Synod of the Church of England

HTB Holy Trinity Church Brompton, London

LEP Local Ecumenical Partnership

MD Malines Document 2

Meissen The Meissen Agreement between the Church of England and the German Evangelical Churches

NSC National Service Committee for Catholic Charismatic Renewal

Porvoo The Porvoo Agreement of the Nordic and Baltic Churches

WCC World Council of Churches

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Defining the terms: Ecumenism and Charismatic Renewal**

Does Charismatic Renewal have an inherent ecumenical property, and if it does, how can that property be defined and its effects measured? If in measuring such an ecumenical property of charismatic renewal it is found to be significant, can it be also demonstrated that it has significance for the ‘mainline’ or official ecumenical movement. This thesis sets out to explore this important issue.

By ‘charismatic renewal’ is meant that particular movement of the Holy Spirit, which began around 1960, which was first known as ‘neo-Pentecostalism’. Its distinguishing location was the older traditional denominations; its distinguishing experience ‘Spirit Baptism’ and the spiritual gifts, which were a feature of the original Pentecostalism.

The words ‘ecumenism’, and its adjective ‘ecumenical’, are common in ecclesiastical parlance, and both words have attracted a variety of meanings and nuances. In some contexts the word ‘ecumenism’ may be used in a rather lightweight sense to describe any activity that reaches out beyond the boundary of a single Christian denomination. In other contexts ‘ecumenism’ may be used to convey something close to its original meaning of ‘oikoumene’, the whole-inhabited world or the global context. There is a strong *prima facie* expectation that Charismatic Renewal ought to be ecumenical. It has become commonplace to refer to the original Pentecostal Movement emanating from the Azusa Street, Los Angeles, revival of 1906 with the Black Leader William Joseph Seymour as ‘ecumenical’ in the sense of it being multi-ethnic and socially integrating. Hollenweger describes the range as: ‘white bishops and black workers, men and women, Asians and Mexicans, white professors and black laundry-women’

(1997:20). Harvey Cox, in his study of Pentecostal Spirituality (1996:16-17), notes Pentecostalism's rise from a small sect to 'a major, world-wide religious movement'. He sees this as an ecumenical feature, referring in particular to the ability of Pentecostalism to root itself across cultures and denominations.

The Roman Catholic Charismatic group meeting at Malines in May 1974 officially declared: 'It is obvious that the Charismatic Renewal is ecumenical by its very nature.'(Suenens 1978:113)

As recently as 2006, J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu in a paper for the summer Conference of the Lutheran Ecumenical Institute of Strasbourg, referred to Pentecostalism as 'inherently ecumenical and this in spite of its seeming inability to work very transparently with existing ecumenical communions.' Later he has: 'There is an inseparable relationship between Pentecostal spirituality and the ecumenical orientation of Pentecostalism as a distinct stream of Christian expression.'(2006:1)

And of course, there is the primal New Testament inference, that if Pentecostalism is understood as a movement of, and rooted in the third person of the Trinity, then pneumatologically, it ought to be ecumenical by derivation from Ephesians chapter 4 v 3, where the Spirit is described as rooting the unity of the Body. In the latest report of the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue there is: '(the Spirit) forms and unites the Church...' (Anglican Communion 2006:36, para 40). Is not therefore the ecumenical dimension of the charismatic renewal something to be expected at the outset? Is it a return to the beginning of the church on the Day of Pentecost?

## **1.2 The Ecumenical Pioneers**

There is nothing new in noting the assertion that Charismatic Renewal, and Pentecostalism before it, displayed an ecumenical dimension. But until the coming of charismatic renewal into the historic denominations in the 1960s, the Pentecostal



movement had largely inhabited a separate ecclesiastical world. How aware was it of its own ecumenical significance?

It was noted in the pioneer Seymour. Hollenweger labels Seymour a 'black ecumenist, in the oral Afro-American culture...' (1997:397) He also mentions several other key examples of early ecumenical Pentecostal pioneers particularly Jonathan Paul (1853-1931), Louis Dalliere (1887-1976) Alexander Boddy (1854-1930) all of whom demonstrated in different ways that Pentecostal experience had an ecumenical instinct (1997:334f). But Gerrit Roelof Polman (1868-1932) serves to make an interesting example of how the ecumenical promise 'gets stuck'. The Dutch scholar and first generation Pentecostal minister Van der Laan, writing of Polman back in 1919, quotes him as saying: 'The purpose of the Pentecostal revival is not to build up a church, but to build up all churches.' (Hollenweger :345) Van der Laan goes on to say that in the end, Polman failed as an ecumenist because: 'Polman's ecumenical heart collided with his fundamentalistic Evangelical head. His Spirit Baptism had generated a loving attitude towards all fellow Christians, but he was unable to fully assimilate this ecumenical experience into his thinking' (*Sectarian Against His Will: in* Hollenweger:346) Hollenweger asks how the early ecumenical spirit of Dutch Pentecostalism could be recaptured. Van der Laan sees a need to accept conflict as a necessary context for innovative theology.

This requires an ecclesiology in which pluriformity becomes a hallmark of the church, a dynamic pluriformity that allows room for conflict and change. It calls for a theology that refuses to make its own position normative; a theology that partakes in an intercultural learning process. A true Pentecostal/Charismatic theology should welcome conflicts as being essential for the continuous work of the Spirit. Conflicts provide the context in which the charismata operate. (*Sectarian Against His Will. 306f*)

From the beginning of the Pentecostal movement it is possible to trace the ecumenical instinct but when that impinges upon received traditions it brings the creator Spirit into inevitable creative conflict. It creates a tension for the pioneering individual like

Polman who may be unable to resolve the tension. There have been several over the twentieth century who have sensed in their early leadings of the Spirit an urge towards a more integrated church and yet somehow cannot run all the way with it. A stalling process or reversion then sets in, in which the pioneer reaches back to his theological base for security and remains there. (see discussion in chapter 5) So what seems to be required in charismatic ecumenists is a provisionality in theology, and an ongoing fluidity of theological reflection. This fluidity, coupled to the owning of a common spiritual experience, is the linking theory, which runs through the present study.

### **1.3 Relevant evidence from previous research theses in British Charismatic renewal.**

Dunn (1970) wrote probably the earliest thesis of the modern era on charismatic renewal, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*. His purpose was an in-depth theological analysis of Christian initiation, evoked by the term ‘baptism in the Holy Spirit’, at precisely the time when that term was new and controversial. He concluded by disagreeing with the fundamental two-stage initiation of classical Pentecostalism, conversion and subsequent baptism in the spirit, and substituted conversion-initiation as a wholesome package focused around a one stage initiation.

Quebedeaux (1975) probably wrote the first historical-theological account of the origins of charismatic renewal in the United States and Great Britain covering the whole period from 1901-1974.

Mather (1980) provided in her thesis a more concentrated historical-theological overview of the development of the Charismatic Movement in Britain from 1964 up to 1980.

An important trio of theses appeared in close chronological proximity around the late 1970s, dealing specifically with Catholic Charismatic Renewal: O’Keeffe (1980), O’Neill (1978), and Pickup (1976).

Finally Hocken’s *Streams of Renewal* (1986) was the published version of his thesis looking at the origins of charismatic renewal in Britain.

Thus there has been considerable work done on the investigation of origins. The present thesis continues the story onwards from 1980, and with a special focus on ecumenism throughout.

Quebedeaux emphasised the vast range of popular pamphlets, emanating from the various phases and sectors of Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement as his primary sources. Interestingly, he found it important to include several biographical summaries of key people in the movement eg. David du Plessis, Michael Harper, Demos Shakarian (of the Full Gospel Businessmens’ Fellowship International). This is a tool used in all of the above theses and in this present one. Quebedeaux does little more than hint at the ecumenical significance of the charismatic movement:

‘The Pentecostal experience in its charismatic Renewal form has brought together clergy and laity of most Protestant, Anglican, Eastern Orthodox, and Catholic denominations in a heartfelt spiritual unity, that the institutional ecumenical movement has been able to match in the course of all its deliberations and pronouncements.’(1975:266)

But in a sequel to his thesis, ‘New Charismatics 2’ (1983) Quebedeaux mentions the significance of Lesslie Newbigin’s ‘third stream’ of Christian emphasis: Pentecostals in addition to Catholics and Protestants, who cannot be ignored in the dialogue.

Quebedeaux (1983:213) quotes Newbigin:

‘Unless the living Spirit Himself takes the things of Christ and shows them to us, we cannot know them. Unless *He* (original emphasis) unites us to the ascended Christ we cannot be united.’ (Newbigin 1957:101)

In his thesis, Quebedeaux notes the increasing stress upon the doctrine of the Holy Spirit (since 1953 at least) as a reason for the emergence and success of CR in

denominations closely aligned with the ecumenical movement throughout the world. But it is the RC Church, through Pope John XXIII ('a New Pentecost') and Vatican II, which has been primarily responsible for the development of a modern theology of the Holy Spirit pertaining to ecumenism (Quebedeaux 1975:240 and 1983:213,214). This latter point is very much confirmed by this study. In contrast to other major churches the Roman Catholics have worked out something close to a considered position, which is generally positive. The Malines Document 2 owns that the charismatic renewal has an ecumenical vocation (see chapter 3).

'The original non-sectarian purpose and goals of charismatic renewal, broadly formulated as early as 1960, did not change in the course of its growth. The conviction persisted that the Pentecostal experience was a force powerful enough to renew and revitalise the church in its full range of contemporary institutional expressions-and potent enough to unify Christians spiritually in an experience, without requiring institutional oneness.'(Quebedeaux 1983:81)

'There is no hard evidence that the total number of self -professed neo-Pentecostals has declined in the 1980s. Since 1977, however, neo-Pentecostalism as a movement-*has* lost its media visibility. Furthermore, it has lost much of its original distinctiveness by accommodation to classical Pentecostalism, non-Pentecostal evangelicalism, and to the 'mainline Christianity' of the historic denominations.' (1983:83)

This loss of distinctiveness and accommodation, which Quebedeaux mentions, are both discussed and also largely confirmed in the present study.

Mather attaches great significance to certain turning points of Renewal history e.g. the Guildford International Conference of July 1971. M. Harper lists four features present at Guildford: international, ecumenical, of a unifying character, and didactic. Gordon (1977), described the conference as: experiential, evangelical, (in that it emphasised the whole of the gospel and the fullness of God's grace), ecumenical, eucharistic (in the sense of expressing thanksgiving in praise, worship and service), and eschatological (in encouraging faith and hope to anticipate the future that belongs to God).

Mather highlights the joint statement of 1977 (Anglican Evangelicals and the Fountain Trust). Apostolic authority now belongs only to the scriptures of the Old and New Testament immediate inspiration is suspect. Quebedeaux (1983:83) also refers to the 1977 statement as an important example of charismatics in dialogue. But Mather (:350) includes Arthur Wallis' comments on Ephesians chapter 4, concerning ministries working together to enable unity. (see Chapter 5). An important principle, which had been accepted by the early leadership in the house churches, was that of fluidity or moving on. Wallis goes on to say that 'the denominations therefore started by moving on with God, but became just as stuck as their predecessors, and because of their tradition they cannot now hear what God is saying.' (Mather:424)

Predictably, Mather notes the ecumenical influence of Michael Harper, one of the pioneers in British Charismatic Renewal; especially his conviction that it is an instrument, which can bring about church unity between all denominations. The emphasis is moved from doctrinal agreement onto the basis of a common experience (:432,433). Harper's conviction reflects the starting point of the present study. However, it can only be a starting focus, since doctrinal issues must be faced at some point. (as Mather herself says below); but as will be pointed out in chapter 2, the Ecumenical movement had not yet advanced to the point it was to reach by the 1990s. Consequently it was difficult for Harper and contemporaries to see ecumenical doctrinal sticking points as other than a barrier. The climate was increasingly one of growing ecumenical disappointment: failure of the Anglican-Methodist scheme, failure of the BCC 'Union by 1980', reactions to first ARCIC, growing divergence with Restorationism and theology underpinning it. (Mather: 448).

In her theological reflection on the basis for unity, Mather asserts '...to call charismatic togetherness "unity" is surely to misunderstand the meaning of the word.

Unity must involve more than feeling, however deep this feeling may be. It must embrace also an intellectual agreement, thus constituting oneness on both levels. In the first sense, the Charismatic Movement has attained a unity, but in the other – that of intellectual oneness – it is lacking. Nevertheless, the climate of fellowship and trust which it has created provides an atmosphere in which questions of theology and doctrine can be discussed in a loving and open way, if the opportunity be taken.’(: 440). Mather moves on to discuss the Charismatic Catholics. There was a growing concern, in the editorials of *Renewal* Magazine in 1973/4, that the Catholic Charismatics showed little sign of waking up to the doctrinal distortions that many evangelicals took for granted as existing in the Roman Catholic Church<sup>1</sup>. But in a June 1974 editorial Michael Harper raised the issue directly. Mather(:441): ‘Harper observes it to be increasingly the case that charismatic Catholics are most eager to prove that the Charismatic Movement endorses Catholic doctrine at every point, and to bend over backwards to please their superiors from the Pope downwards. Does the Holy Spirit really wish them to conform their theology to Catholic traditions? Sceptical Protestants have always asked what happens to Catholic doctrine after Catholics are baptised in the Spirit: “some of us have urged such sceptics to be patient and wait...but now seven years have passed and one begins to wonder how much longer we have to wait” (1974 *Renewal* Editorial)

Interestingly, Harper’s mood in this editorial, contrasts somewhat with his general stance in *This is the day* (1979). The latter is a very positive rationale for the ecumenical significance of CR. (see chapter 3). After considerable correspondence in ‘Renewal’ columns, Michael Harper one year later in June 1975 (*Renewal* editorial 57), noted the importance of the endorsement of Charismatic Renewal by Pope Paul

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<sup>1</sup> See discussion below in chapter 2 on the Nottingham 1977 Conference of Anglican Evangelicals

and Cardinal Suenens, and saw it as an encouragement for all who look to the Holy Spirit to bring renewal to all the churches. Mather notes, that by 1979, Harper had clearly come to terms with the fact that charismatics were remaining in the Catholic church, and that the reality of the Holy Spirit's continued work amongst them under these circumstances had convinced him that they had divine authentication of this.

Noting the date; one wonders if this acceptance of the Catholic charismatics within their own denomination, might have been one of the factors which led Michael Harper to realise that a new phase was beginning, and that this may have influenced the ending of his work with the Fountain Trust. (cf. Mather believes that the Fountain Trust should have dissolved when Michael Harper left. Harper's self-understanding was that his 'unction' had been lifted.) Indeed 1980 may well mark a turning point in British Charismatic Renewal history. The Restoration movement was moving on towards its apogee. The influence of John Wimber was beginning to arrive in Britain; the Alpha Course had not yet gained publicity. The Fountain Trust closed at the end of that year. 'Whereas the American charismatic Movement has tended to coalesce around para-church structures, the movement in Britain was, until the mid-70s, principally within existing churches'(:6). Mather attributes this in Britain very much to the Fountain Trust's influence and pressure. As we shall see from the general dates of the writings of Roman Catholic authors in chapter 3, clustered around the late 1970s and into the 1980s, it was the end of one era, and the beginning of another.

Mather concludes her ecumenical chapter with a key question on the future direction of Charismatic Renewal: 'will it be Restorationist with all true believers coming out to join 'the one body' prepared by the house churches or the denominational way of seeing the respective denominations' reformation and consequent convergences'

(:451). She adds, that time will tell which expectation becomes reality (1983). This present study provides something of the answer to this latter question, especially the evidence of Andrew Walker (1998).

Taking O’Keeffe, O’Neill, and Pickup together they present an extremely thorough analysis of the origins and subsequent development of CCR. Despite considerable overlap in material, each has specific emphases: O’Keeffe has much on the nature of sacramental grace, and water baptism in relation to Baptism in the Spirit. He has an interesting exposition on how the latter might be seen to release or revive dormant gifts which were instilled sacramentally in water baptism (:76) He posits the important notion, following Gelpi (1977:150), that ‘Spirit-baptism is a life long process that cannot be equated with any single graced experience.’ Thus he opens up the co-ordinates in seeking to find a new construct for baptism in the spirit in relation to the traditional theologies of initiation. All three theses have problems with a non-sacramental approach to water baptism.<sup>2</sup> O’Keeffe mainly studies the evolution of the CCR in the context of Catholic ecclesiology, rather than any significance of CCR for the wider ecumenical movement. But he sees the ecumenical potential of CCR: ‘if the movement does reach world-wide proportions it could solve two of the most pressing problems facing the world today, namely the ongoing implementation of the decrees of Vatican II and ecumenism, both of which show signs of *ennui* if not *impasse*.’ (:247) He sees a providential link between Vatican II and the CCR: ‘there was not the faintest sign of this movement at the time of the council (Vatican II), the providential timing of the decrees of the Council is striking.’ (:224)

O’Neill similarly is not concerned to expand his analysis ecumenically. In fact it is difficult to see how he could do so at that stage in the late 1970s. He comments,

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<sup>2</sup> Whilst not stated it seems almost certain that O’Keeffe, O’Neill, and Pickup are Roman Catholics.



however, that there is a natural preference as a result of the renewal for spiritual ecumenism. ‘...continuous stalemate in ecumenical dialogue encourages escape into the more attractive ways of renewal’ (:201). ‘Very few Catholic groups are in fact completely Catholic’ (:199). He contrasts this spiritual ecumenism with the ‘prefabricated unity which is being laboriously constructed in ecclesiastical conclaves’ (: 200). As with O’Keeffe, he sees a glimmer of ecumenical possibility, if CCR ‘...can find a permanent place in a church so traditional in its church government and such a rich sacramental life...then the ecumenical movement which at present has reached an impasse may take on new and existing forms’ (:96) This present study includes analysis of how the ‘rooting’ of renewal into the Catholic church is working out; and how O’Neill and O’Keeffe seem sound in their instinct for eventual ecumenical possibilities. Overall, O’Neill is cautiously welcoming of CCR but generally critical. He sees a danger of CCR becoming self-contained; leading to fragmentation and sectarianism (:62)

Margaret Pickup (1975) is concerned in her thesis, with the changing patterns of authority in the Roman Catholic Church. There is a fulsome analysis of the historical antecedents, which led up to Vatican II: particularly of the Enlightenment and the rise of the sciences:

The perception of the supernatural in the secular world had undergone radical transformation in a hundred years and the old apologetics were not a sufficient legitimisation for belief for the Roman Catholic and consequently neither were they a sufficient refutation of the plausibility structures of other world views being propounded.

The Second Vatican Council set out to remedy the above situation and in so doing undermined the authority structure which has operated in the church, to such an extent that one doubts if it can ever be restored. (: 205,206)

It is within this context that Pickup sets her analysis of CCR. The Catholic Church was forced, post Vatican II, to recognise the importance of the personal element in the ongoing life of the church, which Pickup equates with the charismatic quality of the

believer. She documents some very useful fieldwork in her thesis; particularly her first hand experience of the American Prayer Meetings. She concludes from her encounters that there is little to distinguish in style and theology of these meetings from general Pentecostalism. In both O'Neill and Pickup, the descriptions of the language style and theology of the early CCR meetings, were little different from the 'conversion language' of the general run of evangelicals in the University Christian Union meetings I encountered in the 1960s. But one notes a clear tendency to equate Baptism in the Spirit with tongues as initial evidence.

She notes the ecumenical tendency of CCR, but sees it as a sign of alleviation of embattlement mentality in the Roman Catholic Church. The latter is prepared to 'explicitly recognise the activity of the Holy Spirit in a field wider than the Roman Catholic Communion or other Christian denominations' (:8). On Eucharistic unity Pickup mentions the Notre Dame Conference of June 1972 when 350 priests and 4 bishops concelebrated at the Mass but it was announced that inter-communion was not allowed. (:91) Mather also mentions eucharistic unity: 'Intercommunion is the expression of a total unity that *has been achieved* and it cannot be used as a *means* of establishing that unity, for it would be contradictory and counter-productive to try and express what is not there because of continuing doctrinal differences (:446)

But Pickup's overall ecumenical prognosis is not bright:

'...If CR is to have any ecumenical significance at all, beyond an amalgamation of tongue-speaking Christians, then a lesson must be learned from the classical Pentecostal. That lesson is that symbolic representation of the presence of the Spirit must not be codified, in order to avoid the consequent doctrinal nagging which will later emerge...a divided Christianity is not seen as relevant in the world, neither is a highly formalised Christianity.' (:198,199)

A premature doctrinal tightness in itself becomes divisive if it is used as a test of orthodoxy for a Spirit, which retains a freedom to move beyond the boundaries defined by any particular theological school or denomination.

Taken together, the thesis writers above, around the year 1980, see hopeful ecumenical possibilities but little more than that. Indeed, it is difficult to see how they could say more whilst the renewal itself was still comparatively in its youth, and the official ecumenical movement appeared relatively stagnated at that time. But ecumenical and charismatic history has moved on.

#### **1.4 The Emergence of the main Research Question for the present thesis.**

Much has happened in the quarter century since 1980, both on the charismatic and ecumenical fronts. The present study takes up the historical account since, and tracks the issues forward.

But first, I return briefly to my own initial reflections of the 1960s when charismatic renewal first appeared in the mainline denominations. In the Church of England it was conservative evangelicals who first experienced Spirit Baptism and the initial understanding of the movement was that this was some kind of propellant for mission and evangelism in difficult days. English conservative evangelicals of the 1960's tended to sit lightly to questions of ecclesiology, regarding the inherited formal patterns of state-church worship with a degree of suspicion and irrelevance. It is not surprising therefore that English Evangelical Anglicans had no strong interest in the doctrine of the church. Unity of the Body of Christ generally meant the experienced fellowship (*koinonia*) across whichever denominations happened to be present at the time. The only worthwhile Christian unity was very much assumed to be: 'evangelicals gathered together'. 'True Christians' were already one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3 v 28) and ecclesiastical official ecumenism was of marginal interest. However, when charismatic renewal came, it clearly had two immediate effects on those near it. To those who were touched by it and embraced it there were claims of a discovery of new power, particularly of effectiveness in witness and evangelism. To

those who were suspicious of its claims to be a 'second blessing', it became a source of division and a phenomenon to be rigorously examined, tested and possibly rejected.

An acute theological discussion began over this issue, focused particularly around John Stott's small book: *The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit* (1964).

Dispensationalism became an issue. The ground issue of dispensationalism was that claims to supernatural gifts from an experiential viewpoint were *ipso facto* false because the 'dispensation' which 'dispensed' them came to an end with the closing of the Canon of the New Testament. Thus, claims to a Third Person of the Trinity origin for such gifts must be false, and their real source must lie elsewhere, probably even diabolical. Some German evangelicals in the first Decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century claimed that the Pentecostal movement was from 'below' rather than 'above'. (Hollenweger 1972:222f)

Whatever the evidence for dispensationalism as a theological historical theory, the priority issue for conservative evangelicals coming to terms with charismatic renewal, was the authority of Scripture versus claims to inspiration of the Spirit e.g. words of knowledge (1 Corinthians 12 v 8). What authority have the latter if they sit uneasily to the Canonical Scriptures? The whole area of exegesis and hermeneutics became a key part of the discussion. Those who accepted that the charismatic movement might be of the Holy Spirit, had much theological reconstruction to do. Perhaps that is why in the early years of Charismatic renewal there was a tendency among the conservative evangelicals to take up the 'ready to hand' theology of the classic Pentecostal movement from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. But this was only ever true in general terms. Quite early on, pioneers like Michael Harper (see below) sought to engage theologically with all of the issues surrounding Charismatic Renewal. A separate *Theological Renewal* supplement was published from 1975 onwards as a

supplement to the main *Renewal* magazine and quickly gained theological respect in its immediate circle of readership and beyond.

So the initial perception of the charismatic movement was that it would only be expected to take root where there was doctrinal 'soundness' to begin with, which popularly meant evangelicals. But when it became evident in 1967, that the charismatic movement had no such boundaries, the movement among Roman Catholics had to be taken seriously. It raised in several minds (including my own at that time) the obvious ecumenical question: do we have here an experiential clue to the eventual re-unification of the Christian Church? Roman Catholic Charismatic priests appeared on the platform at Fountain Trust Conferences, and there seemed no doubt that here also were like-minded and like-experienced people who simply could not be dismissed as odd. The situation might indeed be compared with Cornelius in Acts 10 v 34: 'Peter began: I now see how true it is that God has no favourites...' (New English Bible). Here the Holy Spirit had so obviously and sovereignly crossed a major confessional boundary between Jew and Gentile.

It was self-evident that in a spiritual renewal movement that had clearly leapt boundaries, one saw previously different categories of Christian joined in a common experience. And if they were joined in a common experience that seemed so fundamental to Christian faith, then would it be natural to expect this to lead to a totally rejoined pan-denominational Christian church? How such a goal might be achieved was unclear, but this was an intuitive hope, based on the observation of charismatics from different backgrounds, and joined in worship on the basis of a common, but not necessarily identical, experience of the one Spirit. Thus it was at that time, the early 1960s, that the main research question of this study was taking shape in my mind: could the Charismatic Movement, by renewing the churches in

their life and mission, be the principal means of their eventual reunification? Several others have raised the same question: for example Quebedeaux (: 7) states ‘...charismatic renewal is also ecumenical, although not in the sense that it openly seeks institutional unity as a goal.’ As with Mather above, Quebedeaux also cites Harper’s stress on spiritual unity first:

‘But those involved believe that this is where Christians should *begin* in their quest for unity, not at the conference table or the debating chamber...the ecumenical movement seems to put the cart before the horse; whereas this new move of the Holy Spirit is indicating what we should be doing first.’ (Harper 1971:154)

And in his introduction to Hocken’s ‘Streams of Renewal’ (1986), Hollenweger echoes this hunch:

Peter Hocken sees the uniqueness of the Charismatic Movement in the fact that for the first time since the Reformation, an ecumenical grass roots movement emerged which crossed the frontiers between Evangelicals and Catholics. This is indeed of high significance both for theological and historical research. The basis of this ecumenical approach is the fact that Christians discover a common experience, which is at the heart of their spirituality – and this in spite of their differing theologies and interpretations of this experience.

## **1.5 Methodology**

In approaching the basic research question of this study (could the Charismatic Movement, by renewing the churches in their life and mission, be the principal means of their eventual reunification?) it seemed good to break it down into four groups of questions, which are germane to the basic question.

1. Does Charismatic Renewal by its very existence and nature compel the different churches towards each other? Is it a natural ecumenical motivator?
2. How far, can charismatic renewal ‘renew’ a denomination? Is that denomination willing to re-appraise its own history through new lenses, and consequently be open to re-float some of its theology?

3. Are the corresponding charismatic manifestations in other denominations being noted, evaluated trans-denominationally and attempts made to co-ordinate them? Will appropriate leaders read the clues and try to progress them forwards in engagement with official ecumenism?

4: Does the charismatic movement make a serious contribution to discussion about Christian initiation and the ministry of the church? (See chapter 5)

It is proposed to examine the questions above, primarily in relation to Britain, since the author is more familiar from his experience and work, with the charismatic and ecumenical movements in Britain; and thus better placed to obtain and assess the relevant data. In particular there is a sharper focus on charismatic renewal as it has developed within the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church. (But inevitably, the ecumenical dialogue documents and the theology within them clearly relates beyond British boundaries).

By focusing mainly on renewal in the Church of England and Roman Catholic Church in England, one engages with several significant ecumenical boundaries. The Anglican Church is a providential theological 'bridge' between Catholic and Protestant. Anglicans wrestle with this theological bridge, both externally as a result of their ecclesiastical location between the two camps; but also internally, as they seek to hold in unity the two poles within one confession. This offers many useful ecumenical clues to the wider church scene.

Nevertheless, given the very nature of ecumenism it has also been necessary to make forays outside these two denominations, particularly when opening up the issues surrounding baptism and episcopacy (see chapter 5) which are so fundamental to ecumenical matters. The insights of Restorationism will be seen to be relevant in this context. The basic research question implies two stages: first the renewal, by which

individual churches would rediscover their roots and come to a new knowledge of what their particular identity is founded upon. Secondly, the churches would begin to find their true relation to each other from their separateness.

The thesis uses a historical-theological methodology throughout. Some chapters are self-evidently historical, such as chapter 2, which sets out briefly the history of attempts at denominational reunion since 1960. Others are mainly theological such as chapter 5, concerned with Baptism and Episcopacy. Still others, such as chapter 3, are historical-theological in approximately even balance.

The basic problem for the researcher in tackling this particular question, was how to relate the particular to the general. By definition, 'ecumenism' is a global word, and the undertone of the ecumenical movement is towards a global goal. Barry Till (1972:15) defines ecumenism as: 'the movement among the Christian churches for the recovery of their visible and institutional unity.' The evidence that emerges to support the thesis and any clear results, must be applicable across a world context. There cannot be an ignoring of the global picture, however detailed any sub-section of the study might be. Thus, the task required both choices to be made in detailed issues for discussion, but also to integrate the details into the broader canvas. There was always a risk in the thesis of superficiality and generality in attempting the broad scope, but the choice of in-depth specific issues had to be significant for the global as well as the local. (eg. most obviously baptism).

Similarly, if Charismatic Renewal is primarily acknowledged as a pneumatological movement, then it too, by derivation from the doctrine of the Trinity, must also be a global movement, despite its great variety of inculturations. Nevertheless, England, as a locus, has been of particular interest in the last forty years, because of its unique spectrum of separated churches, who together have explored ways of achieving a



closer visible unity. During the last twenty years in particular the ecumenical developments have been quite significant with the formation of the New Ecumenical Instruments. (see chapter 1). The present author has been fortunate to have worked in, and alongside, much of this developing local ecumenism as a minister within one of the new Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) from 1976 to 1989; and also as a County Ecumenical Secretary from 1989 to 2002. These posts involved extensive attendance at a variety of ecumenical committee meetings from local to national level over a twenty-five year period. It also required a keeping abreast of ecumenical literature, both for personal reading, but also for the information and training of many involved in local churches. He has thus been in a position to monitor and track events as they have unfolded and to discern some of the key issues. Also, at the level of personal spirituality, the present author would locate himself on the inside of the charismatic boundary fence, and this has consequently, and perhaps inevitably, meant that he has spent a considerable period pondering just how the charismatic world relates to the wider world of official ecumenism. Hence the genesis of the present study.

It was decided to set out in Chapter 2 an historical context of the significant ecumenical highpoints from the 1960s. Sufficient detail has been given to understand the growth of ecumenical thinking over the period, but it is not an attempt at a full and detailed history (see Appendix 3 and *Called to be One* (1996) for a fuller introduction to this period). Whilst the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 is usually taken as the start of the modern Ecumenical Movement, it is not until well into the 1960s that the first serious decision about a denominational reunion faced the Church of England and the Methodist Church. As is well known and documented, the scheme

collapsed, and this triggered a predictable heart searching about how ecumenical work might proceed.

Chapter 2 takes up the story, post-collapse, by looking first at John Wenham's approach to ecumenism from a conservative evangelical starting line. Wenham's position was based on the hope from the 1964 Faith and Order conference at Nottingham, that there could be a Covenant made, to have a United Church in England by Easter Day 1980 at the latest. Wenham goes into some detail as to why he is unhappy with this; not with the idea of Christian Unity in itself, but why any United Church in England ought only to be conservative evangelical. But significantly, he writes from pre-charismatic assumptions.

Secondly the report of the Anglican Evangelicals at their 1977 Conference noted that Charismatic Renewal had made an impact and that it had ecumenical significance. Likewise that Conference said some positive and hopeful things, about relationships and dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church. (See Appendix 2)

I started with these two illustrations from Anglican Evangelicalism, because of my own theological denominational background in that area, i.e. immediate familiarity. Also, the roads out from that area lead on towards the first major ecumenical bridge to be crossed, the Catholic-Protestant divide. In this context, the book *Growing into Union* (1970) is considered since it was quasi-prophetically written, by two Evangelicals and two Anglo-Catholics. It was prophetic in the sense that its recommendations were not acted upon at the time, but something approximating to it has emerged in the New Ecumenical Instruments. There were to be two more ecumenical failures: the Ten Propositions for Unity, and the Covenant for Unity, before the Inter-Church process got underway in 1985. This process led on to Swanwick 1987 where the great breakthrough came, which caused a fresh surge of

ecumenical enthusiasm by the formation in September 1990 of the New Ecumenical Instruments in the four British Countries. (Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Churches Together in England, ACTS: Action for Churches Together in Scotland, and CYTUN ('togetherness') in Wales) The effect of fifteen years of working in this way has made a significant shift in mutual acceptance of different denominations, whilst at the same time recognising that the denominations are nowhere quite near 'technical' reunion. The warming ecumenical temperature has brought the denominations to closer co-operation in many fields, but familiar sticking points arise. The Eucharist and ministry is still an issue with the Roman Catholics. However, the shift in attitude between churches is significant and since 1990 the British Churches have been in forward gear ecumenically speaking. (but see Chapter 7 beginning) Chapter 2 closes with an attempt to locate where the 'charismatics' might be hidden within the ecumenical processes and to estimate their significance. It seemed important to establish the existence of charismatics within the ecumenical process at this point in the thesis. A closer study of certain individuals follows in chapter 6.

However, keeping in mind, as stated above, the intention of the thesis to balance the local with the global, the broader canvas of the World Council of Churches could not be lost sight of. Hence in Chapter 4 attention was given to the emergence and development of *koinonia* ecclesiology, especially as it seems to be the current centre of gravity of ecumenical thinking at the World Council of Churches level. What significantly emerged in the discussion of the term *koinonia* in the WCC context, was a seminal line of thinking for a fresh pneumatological approach to ecumenism. If one takes ecumenism in its totality, and asks the question: upon what basis, can all Christians come together; then one must seek something beyond a credal formula,

however sophisticated. In this context, the ecumenist Mary Tanner offers the concept of 'portrait' as a way to encompass the total Christian church coming together. Thus in inter-relating the global and the local, all portions of the total picture must somehow be brought together. This is said because it is easy to slip into the notion that the visible unity of the Christian church is merely reconciliation between the big denominations. So chapters 2 and 4 provide something of an historical and theological basis for the thesis.

Although the title of the thesis includes the word 'Anglican', no attempt is made to do a systematic historical presentation of Anglican charismatic renewal as such. There is a considerable literature on the subject already published; however, apart from being the author's school of provenance, Anglican renewal lurks as a subliminal theme throughout the thesis, and in specific individual cases is reflected upon in some detail. eg. Michael Harper, Colin Buchanan, and Stephen Abbott. It seems important to acknowledge this, because significantly for this thesis, Anglican charismatic renewal has already embraced and bridged both Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics within the Church of England. (e.g John Gunstone and Colin Urquhart were both Anglo-Catholic in their pre-renewal theology).

However, a special focus is made of the Charismatic Movement in the Roman Catholic Church, to investigate how the movement impacted that church. Basic to the methodology of the thesis is to investigate just how charismatic renewal moves the theology of individuals, as well as churches and denominations. The present author was reasonably familiar with the processes of impact by charismatic renewal upon certain Anglicans and the Church of England in particular, but not the Roman Catholic Church. Hence Chapter 3 became the largest chapter of the study and indeed

presented the author with his biggest research challenge. Although the author's ecumenical work had brought him into contact with many Roman Catholics at an official level, yet his knowledge of the denomination 'from the inside' was scanty and knowledge of Roman Catholic charismatics less so.

So a fourfold approach was taken to study the CCR. Inevitably the first objective was a trawl through the CCR literature, especially from the early days, to discover ecumenical statements, signs, attitudes and the broadening of engagement beyond Roman Catholic boundaries. Thus Suenens, Hocken, Emmanuel Sullivan, the Ranaghans, Francis Martin, O'Connor, Laurentin, Kilian McDonnell, Tugwell and Muhlen are drawn upon. Together they offer a good basis both for historical study of the origins and development and as a theological critique for the movement. They demonstrate that from the beginning, CCR has had theological underpinning of good quality. Indeed, CCR has had an official acceptance within the Roman Catholic Church and its unique contribution recognised. The theme of the linkage between Vatican II and the beginning of the CCR, emerges frequently in the literature. In addition, the three theses already referred to (O'Keeffe, O'Neill and Pickup) have presented full analyses of the 'in house' concerns of CCR. Chief among these was how to square the theology of 'baptism in the spirit' with sacramental theology of baptism and confirmation in the Catholic church (see chapter 4). This exercise proved interesting in the light of Mather's comments (above) about how CCR drew strength and became domesticated within the Roman Catholic Church from the 1980s, post the demise of The Fountain Trust in December of that year. Indeed the chief things that were looked for in this period was to discover to what extent CCR had become domesticated to the denomination, what shape it took within and or whether it still retain a transforming edge. It is one thing to state a vision in terms of 'radical open-

ness' to the Spirit, as Emmanuel Sullivan does (see chapter 3), but it is quite another to see that vision grasped and moved forward by significant numbers of people. The impression I gained from the overall study looking at the twenty years from 1980 to 2000 was that charismatic renewal in general had cooled off somewhat from its early days. Hollenweger (1997:357) agrees. He examples Bittlinger, Tugwell and Kilian McDonnell as 'forward pointing signposts of ecumenism' in 1980. And he adds: 'My impression today is that these early pioneering approaches have largely been forgotten in favour of either a conservative catholic or a narrow evangelical approach.'

Of the authors mentioned, it would be difficult to estimate their relative significance, but Francis Martin and Peter Hocken together emerged as very significant for the present researcher. Francis Martin seems to have opened up a vital old theme in a new way. The exegesis of scripture is one of the key components in the whole process of churches and individuals rediscovering their roots and identity. Martin's 'hermeneutic of the Spirit' is a vital tool to be grasped, and not to be confused with 'fundamentalism'. Hocken seems to have grasped with Michael Harper, something of the same vision of charismatic renewal as common experience pointing to ecumenical progress. In particular, Hocken's methodology for seeking Christian unity invites denominations and separated movements to clarify again the work of God 'in their roots'. This issue is discussed in chapter 7. Hocken's work thus forces the question: 'what do we mean by 'renewal' and in particular charismatic renewal as an ecumenical motivator.

In addition to the study of the literature of the early Catholic Charismatics, it was felt that some face to face fieldwork was required as possible confirmatory evidence beyond the literature, and to assess the extent of the existence and effectiveness of CCR. This work is reported on extensively in the second section of chapter 3. Of

necessity, this was limited to the English scene and after a difficult start, a ‘catholic charismatic trail’ started to emerge, which progressively revealed useful contacts and information. The several personal interviews are summarised in the main text and are detailed more fully in appendix 7a. The fieldwork revealed that in the late 1990s, CCR was still very much alive and had matured and developed. But it was the discovery of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal’s English based journal, *Good News*, which provided an excellent primary source for English CCR; both theologically, and as a guide to the plethora of events taking place under the CCR banner in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. From such a broad choice I selected to attend two ‘Renewal Masses’ and also visited a Catholic based Ecumenical community. The main setback was the pilot survey started among the 48 members of the National Service Committees of the four home nations. There was a poor initial response, and simultaneously with my telephone follow up survey, there was published a questionnaire for the Newman conference of 2005. Although the sample was large for this survey, (over 1000) none of the main results have yet been published. However, what was very profitable was the establishing of personal contact with the editor of *Good News*, Kristina Cooper, with whom many useful historically informative and theological conversations were held.

The visits and interviews I conducted enabled me to confirm what I had deduced from study and reading *Good News*, that CCR was still a ‘going concern’ with maturity. It was still ecumenically flavoured but less so than 20 years previously. But there was no evidence that the majority of Catholic charismatics are loosening from their denomination. If anything the reverse is true and there is evidence that CCR has settled within its denomination. But the Newman Conference of 2005 provided fresh grounds for hope that the original ecumenical leanings, which were noticeable in the

beginning, could be recovered. This view was further reinforced by Charles Whitehead, Chair of the English National Service Committee for CCR, as recently as 2007, who sees a new call to recover the first ecumenical vision of renewal. All this is discussed in the fourth section of chapter 2, and picked up again in chapter 6, where something of confirmation of the original convictions re-emerges.

If one is looking for more contemporary evidence of the original ecumenical qualities of charismatic renewal, then the 1990s Alpha course phenomenon provides it. This course has become a byword for its success as an evangelistic instrument, multi-denominationally and internationally, but its ecumenical consequences are very significant. Alpha is in reality a 'Baptism in the Spirit in disguise.' What is basically a Christian initiation course, has demonstrated its capacity to be adaptable and acceptable to many shades of church; and it is rooted in a charismatic spirituality. For the purpose of this thesis, it was not felt necessary to extend to a full analysis of the Alpha Course, other than a brief history of its origins, and also a brief summary of the significance of the original Catholic 'Life in the Spirit' seminars. This was supplemented by a sample of evidence from *Alpha News* demonstrating the extent of involvement by Catholics ecumenically in Alpha.

So, taking the four components of chapter 3 together, they provide a substantive picture of where contemporary CCR in England is and outline its new challenge.

The study looks in some detail at baptism and episcopacy, to see how these traditional ecumenical sticking points could be resolved, when looked at through a charismatic lens. Baptism effectively asks: 'Who is a Christian?' Episcopacy effectively asks: 'Who is rightfully in authority in the church?' If such basic issues are not addressed then no solution can really emerge to the unity equation.



What has become one of the standard ecumenical texts of recent decades: the WCC Faith and Order Group, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Lima text BEM) represents a considerable consensus and was widely accepted across denominations. Its title suggests the three key ‘sticking-point’ areas where agreement is needed on the way to a wider visible Christian unity. BEM shows that there is a considerable distance to go before there is agreement on baptism. Churches may use the same outward criteria and baptismal certificates, but as the study shows, each denomination reads into the other’s interpretation different nuances. It seemed for the purposes of the study that a fresh look at initiation in its charismatic context was required, especially when the phrase ‘Baptism of the Holy Spirit’ is such a defining fulcrum in the Pentecostal/charismatic milieu. There is no major discussion of the Eucharist in this thesis; mainly on grounds of space, though it is referred to in passing in several places. Some of the sacramental/theological issues surrounding it bear a similarity to baptismal issues. But this side-stepping is not intended to deny that the Eucharist is still the major sticking point between Catholics and others. This is deeply rooted in their ecclesiology and doctrine of transubstantiation. For Catholics the Eucharist is very much the keel of their church, and the ‘one table’ will come into being, only when there is ‘one Body’. Inter-communion is the end not the means. Muhlen is particularly strong on this one. In *A Charismatic Theology* (1978:18,19) says that the deliberate enduring of eucharistic separation is a spiritual contribution to the hoped-for unity, and he questions the point of some individuals “leaping over the wall” if all the others remain separated.

Without claiming exhaustive treatment, I identify and draw together three streams in the discussion on episcopacy. The first is the long-standing and hitherto intransigent debate about historical Episcopal succession. Secondly, I look at alternative theories

of episcopacy from the grassroots. The BEM and PORVOO (Appendix 5) agreements in recent days have loosened the log-jam in the debate. The charismatic dimension is brought to bear when one looks across to Restorationism and notes the importance placed on ‘apostles’ in their scheme of things. Mather’s study (see above) is important in this context. But it is a fresh look at the fivefold ministry of Ephesians 4, and the Pauline claim that it is linked significantly to the unity of the church, which yields the most interesting results for episcopacy. The work of Josephine Bax and Stephen Abbot especially suggests one of the main discoveries of this thesis, viz. ‘apostles of unity’. Does a new order of apostles and prophets exist in the contemporary church, which is not recognised? In the discussion, one discovered that the wheel starts to come round full circle: one finds oneself returning to something of the given-ness of ministry and gifting, which chimes with some of the rationale about the historic episcopate. What emerged encouragingly from the study on baptism and episcopacy, were the existence of theological routes out of the impasse, which could command wide assent.

The notion that Charismatic renewal could have ecumenical consequences was brought to attention forty years ago in several ways. The visibility of different denominational representatives on the platform at the Fountain Trust meetings was one of the early icons. This happened well before ‘renewal’ started to penetrate denominations in significant ways. But of some significance was the way in which Charismatic Renewal started to change the spirituality and theological presuppositions of individuals. The first part of chapter 6 is given to mini-biographies of some early charismatic leaders. (a tool used in other theses). They were selected from a much longer list of possible examples, partly because of the author’s familiarity with their ministries and writings, and in the case of Pawson, Watson, Abbott, and Buchanan, additional correspondence. David Watson of York initiated significant contacts and

Conference work in Ireland. His charismatic experience led him beyond the normal confines of Anglican Evangelicalism to make strong relationships with Catholic Charismatics in Ulster. David Pawson and Tom Smail wrestled theologically with the doctrine of scripture in the light of their charismatic experience, at a time when the charismatic-evangelical divide was a felt difference. Dave Tomlinson represents movement in the opposite direction from Restorationist 'apostle' to radical churchman, trying to come to terms with the new-age movement. Coming from a liberal theological background, Stephen Abbott wrote a significant charismatic / ecumenical book: *Join Our Hearts* (1989).

Study of these individuals opens up the meaning of revelation and the place of the liberal theologian. It can be shown that the charismatic is well placed in the theological process as the possessor of a primary experience, which needs evaluation. A strand which emerged from the personal study is a recognition that the demonic may, and probably does have a role in church divisions. But one common feature of personal theology is hermeneutical shifts and stances, so it seemed appropriate to devote some space in the second part chapter 6 to some samples of fresh biblical exegesis on familiar ecumenically relevant passages

So the overall methodology of the task of the thesis has been to identify what in the author's mind seem the key issues of ecumenism, and to look at them individually through a charismatic lens. The ecumenical canvas is extremely broad and the attempt has been made to integrate the discussion of some of the key issues against this broad canvas. A lot of things have to work together across the complex of the church, if it is to be perceived how visible unity will emerge in a broadly pneumatological way. The conviction of this researcher is that it remains a

possibility, but as the study concludes, there is a need to recapture something of a largely lost earlier vision.

As the study proceeded several other subsidiary subjects emerged as key components in the overall ecumenical landscape. For example: such issues as Charism and Institution (see Chapter 4) and the cruciality of the ecumenical dialogues, could each be a subject of major study in its own right. By 1996 no less than thirty-nine dialogues were in process (see Appendix 1). Some of these dialogues are/were highly significant and the Roman Catholic Church is involved in several. As mentioned, above the significant Vatican – Pentecostal Dialogue has run to four phases, the last being from 1990 to 1997. This uniquely important series has revealed so much convergence and agreement between the older classic Pentecostals and Roman Catholics, and has heightened the importance of bringing Pentecostal spirituality and scholarship around the same table as the Roman Catholics.

Many bi-lateral dialogues have had the goal of structural unity of the participating denominations (eg. Anglican-Methodist Chapter 2). However, most Dialogues have a more interim goal: to set out in documental form the areas of common agreement and disagreement between the two participating denominations. Usually, such dialogues are held, by bringing teams of theologians from each denomination, into close discussion and study. Their reports are then considered by the authorities of the appropriate denominations, and actions towards closer structural convergence of ministry may be taken. At the heart of the process, the seeking of theological convergence is an essential component in the total ecumenical landscape. The thesis concludes with its starting conviction of the ecumenical nature of charismatic renewal remaining intact, but the practical conclusions are somewhat cautious and conditional.

The Spirit might well be calling the church to a reunion via reintegration with the ancient roots (esp. Hocken). Reference is made to closing the gap between Jew and Gentile. If this has any credibility, it seems logically inevitable that stronger linkages are being called for across Gentile Christianity; specifically the Catholic–Protestant gap and the Eastern–Western gap must be the focus of ecumenical energies. Paul Avis (1986:111) hints that there are no simplistic answers to this problem: ‘The present task of ecumenical theology is to create the conditions in which the tacit unity of Christians can be realised in and through the inevitable power structures of the visible Church on earth.’ Much has been written on Pentecostalism and ecumenism, which is well expounded and full of enthusiastic hope, but the academic product usually ends with open-ended signposts. Such signposts invite church leaders to take the issues forward. By studying in some detail the issues above (ranging from koinonia to episcopacy, from Churches Together in England to charismatic individuals’ theologies), what at first may seem a broad range of loosely related issues, this thesis constructively points the way forward to a realistic and pragmatic ecumenical challenge, with charismatic renewal providing a vital contribution.

### **1.6 Division and Unity from the same Spirit?**

In studying the inter-relation between the charismatic and ecumenical movements, as well as subsidiary subjects, one gradually encounters two moderating crucial questions. First: one has to ask in the face of considerable evidence: is charismatic renewal anti-ecumenical, divisive rather than unitive? If it is thought of as inspiring and energising a new ecumenism, how can it be explained that the same movement causes division? Andrew Walker discovered in his study of Restorationism that it

was extremely factional (1998:48) and that he asks if Pentecostalism is schismatic by its very nature? (1998:263)

The same Spirit, which arouses an imperative urgency for mission, can at one and the same time give rise to an upstaging of the ecumenical instinct. This was noted during the English Decade of Evangelism from 1990 to 2000. Failing ecumenical efforts were seen as a diversion of vital energy away from the church's primary task of mission and evangelism. Conversely, the calls to evangelism, which came from the denominations, were urged to be planned, and executed ecumenically. In some mysterious way, the one Spirit appears to motivate both unity and mission, but frequently they are perceived to be going in opposite directions.

Cecil Robeck Jr.(2002) raises this same question of the Charismatic Movement and the Ecumenical Movement both claiming to be of the same Spirit, but seeming to display an apparent inconsistency in the effects of each:

‘...Pentecostal, Charismatic...has spawned over 30,000 new denominations. Is it possible that the Holy Spirit has given birth to both movements, one seemingly intent upon consolidation, while the other pushes the limits of uncontrolled growth? What does it mean for the Church to be One when it is so rife with the multiplication of newer ecclesiastical organisations? Is ‘visible unity’ what is meant when we confess the character of the Church as ‘One’, or is it some other form of unity? Should the notion of ‘visible unity’ even make reference to any form of ‘institutional unity’?

Robeck raises key questions, which are discussed in this study: how is unity to be defined and where it is rooted? Is it fundamentally pneumatological, so that there can be a unity ‘of’ or ‘in’ the Spirit, which exists irrespective of any ecclesiastical structures? Is Christian unity something that was once there in the ideal days of the first century and has now been lost through fragmentation? Has there ever been a time in the Church's history, when the unity for which Christ prayed actually existed? One might guess, at this early stage in the study, that unity is experienced in some

measure in all generations of the church, but glimpsed and experienced in a partial and fragmentary manner.

Secondly, another relevant question is: 'When is a movement not a movement?' The answer surely is, 'when it has stopped.' Both the charismatic and ecumenical movements remain identifiable whilst they are in motion. If either or both come to a halt, their identity is obscured, and the basic research question becomes blurred or even irrelevant. There is reason to believe that much of what defined the early charismatic movement has become quietly mainstream and that the original movement no longer has an identifiable leading edge. As a personal observation of the 1990's charismatic renewal across the denominations, it seems to have somewhat attenuated; and many who might twenty years previously have expected to see and seek gifts of the Holy Spirit, have now settled for a musical diet of contemporary 'worship songs'. Often the music style alone seems to define what is charismatic or not in a particular contemporary local church. The sense of expectancy and openness has dropped in favour of more routine predictable diet.

There has been much diffusion, division and contra-flow within the charismatic movement over forty years, and because of this, it is also possible to see why renewal can be perceived as coming in 'waves', with different emphases at different stages. Hence one has the labelling of the movement's phases as, 'Third Wave', Fourth Wave', 'Toronto Blessing' etc. It might well be in the economy of the Spirit, that a period of forward thrust is followed by a period of reflection and gestation. Similarly, the mainstream ecumenical movement appears to be passing through the doldrums and is confused over its own future.

This present thesis is concerned to explore these questions. In order to do that, it seemed necessary to embark on a fairly detailed analysis of how the charismatic

renewal understands its own ecumenicity, then to bring that exercise into engagement with the 'official' ecumenical movement. It is only as this exercise is attempted, that we shall discover first how complex the issues of ecumenism are, and secondly how effective or not charismatic renewal is as an ecumenical motivator.

It seems appropriate to close this introduction with a more dramatic account of a Spirit initiated ecumenical advance. It indicates the possibilities that such an initiative may generate: unity in Christ, manifested in a common experience, with the theology to follow. The account comes from Poland: (White 1998:250)

During 1991 in Poland a large group of Pentecostal pastors met with an equal number of Roman Catholic priests and bishops. Before the communist regime the Pentecostals had suffered persecution from the Catholics. During the communist years the Pentecostals, favoured by the communists, had frequently collaborated with the regime to inform against Catholic activities and fugitives. Understandably, little love was lost between the two groups. Yet the word of God was ministered, and as the Holy Spirit fell on most of the members of the two groups, the time came when all the men from both sides were weeping and embracing one another in forgiveness. Not all doctrinal differences were immediately resolved. The purpose of the meeting was not to deal with doctrine, however important that might be. But one Roman Catholic bishop stated twice, at different points in the proceedings, that if it came to a choice between the two, he would rather Catholic parishioners became living Pentecostals than spiritually dead Catholics, implying that spiritual life was what mattered.

In this incident, one sees just the kind of ecumenical trigger that charismatic renewal could be by nature. It has similarities with the Cornelius incident in Acts of the Apostles, chapter 10. It cameos the process that is studied in this thesis, and may well be highly significant on the route to visible unity.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **SETTING THE ECUMENICAL SCENE IN ENGLAND**

This chapter traces the story of early attempts at denominational reunion in England from the 1960s, through the failure of the Anglican-Methodist scheme to the successful creation of the New Ecumenical Instruments in 1990. Initially the lens is Anglican Evangelical, but it changes to a broader look as the chapter progresses. Finally, a descriptive search is made for where modern charismatics may be located in the ecumenical process.

#### **2.1 The failure of the first Anglican-Methodist reunion scheme**

It has been convenient to split ecumenical history in England into three sections. The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was described as the era of the enthusiasts, with the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 being taken as the starting point. 1942 marked the beginning of formal co-operation with the formation of the British Council of Churches. 1990 marked the beginning of phase three with the formation of the New Ecumenical Instruments (see below). Popular presentations have seen progressive development ecumenically in terms of the ‘five C’s’: competition, co-existence, co-operation, commitment, and communion.

I take up the story between 1965 and 1970 when hopes of a major ecumenical breakthrough in the form of Anglican/ Methodist Reunion were steadily raised and then dashed when the scheme failed to gain sufficient approval from the Church of England Convocations. When the dust of disappointment had settled and some of the pieces had been picked up, the inquests and the debate restarted. Much had been expected from the scheme and its failure threw into the open a fresh debate about the basic requirements for any future scheme of denominational reunion.

Four dissentients to the Anglican/ Methodist scheme, outlined in some detail their reasons for voting against the original two stage plan of re-union; more importantly they set out an alternative way forward for reunion between Christian denominations. (Buchanan et al. 1970) The trigger for the original scheme had been Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher's University sermon at Cambridge in 1948, in which he had invited the Free Churches to take episcopacy into their system. Having taken it and tried it out, the assumption was that, being found successful, re-unification could then proceed by drawing the Free Church episcopal orders into the Anglican historic episcopate. *Growing into Union* boldly asserted that the Anglican-Methodist scheme was wrong both at conception and birth. Lord Fisher had set the ecumenical direction for twenty-three years by a single sermon; but the route he set had proved to be a cul-de-sac (Buchanan: 24).

*Growing into Union* then began to re-dig the ecumenical theological seedbed by re-opening discussion on scripture and tradition, God and Grace, church and sacraments, and episcopacy and ministry. In other words, a radical theological primacy was called for prior to arbitrarily selecting the starting point such as the given of Anglican Episcopacy as Lord Fisher had done. Within its 200 pages some very useful material is contained. There is a radical look at the real function of bishops. There is criticism of the particular Episcopal work pattern of the English Diocesan bishop. (Buchanan:78,79) Buchanan uses some of the same material and argument in relation to the bishops' job description nearly 30 years later in *Is the Church of England Biblical?* (1998)

But generally, *Growing into Union* is of sound instinct and three features are mentioned (:172) which have come to pass in the development of the 1990 instruments (see below). For example: the eventually defined goal of unity would be

‘organic, visible, and sacramental’. There would be theological norms sought, with explicit reference to the Bible. Unity should be local and mission orientated. There were also the first explicit hints that the Holy Spirit had a place in guiding the church towards her unity.

The main suggestion of *Growing into Union* was that effectively a new united church would emerge as bits and pieces of existing churches ceded into it from older denominations under a new Episcopal jurisdiction. The process would be drawn out over a lengthy period and for some years parallel authorities would operate. (Compare this with my concluding chapter where something close to this has emerged as ecumenical reality). Eventually there would be one new ‘melting pot’ as the church ‘grew into union’. At the time this scheme appeared radical and sounded far fetched, but on deeper reflection it touched on the key issues which have had to be faced in recent years such as mutual recognition of ministries. A quasi-episcopate and parallel jurisdiction has effectively been invented for the Local Ecumenical Partnerships from the 1980s onwards. *Growing into Union* was significant ecumenically, not simply by what was said as by whom it was said. Its four authors were two Evangelicals (Packer and Buchanan) and two Anglo-Catholics (Leonard and Mascall). They demonstrated in their proposals that it was possible to construct a scheme which bridged two major theological traditions.

## **2.2 Two Evangelical approaches to unity: (1) John Wenham**

Two years after *Growing Into Union* was published, John Wenham, an Anglican Evangelical scholar and author of the popular: ‘Elements of New Testament Greek’, published: *The renewal and unity of the Church in England* (1972). It is both a lament, and a proposed reconstruction, but this time solely from the conservative

evangelical camp. He begins by reflecting upon a significant historical conference in September 1964 of the Faith and Order group of the British Council of Churches, and of the rather (to him) spellbinding resolution at the end of the conference to seek a united church in England by Easter 1980. The text of the resolution was as follows:

United in our urgent desire for One Church Renewed for Mission, this conference invites the member churches of the British Council of Churches, in appropriate groupings such as nations, to covenant together to work and pray for the inauguration of union by a date agreed among them. We dare to hope that this date should not be later than Easter Day, 1980. (: 10)

This motion was not preconceived before the conference and had not been part of the pre-conference study. It began in a sub section study group and, says Wenham:

.....then in a full section, till finally it was commended to the whole conference with reasoned passion. A large majority, perhaps five-sixths of those present, voted in favour. Fifty-three voted against. I managed to keep my head and along with seventeen others, abstained from voting. (:11)

Wenham says that although when the motion was first put, his head said it was nonsense, yet his heart said 'This is of God'. When he went to bed that night he felt

'Full of goodwill even towards Christians from whom I most profoundly differed, and with the thought of renewal continually recurring to my mind and with the word *renewal* (emphasis mine) repeatedly on my lips' (:12).

Wenham interestingly does not put 'renewal' in parentheses. That was in 1964 and it is interesting that an Anglican academic picks up the sense that somehow God was at work in the 1964 Conference and yet he could not immediately square it with his evangelical convictions and consequently could not bring himself to vote. (echoes of Polman?) Could it be that the word 'renewal' which he sensed, had more importance than he realised at the time? In 1964 the charismatic renewal in the Church of England was still in its infancy and its profile was low. Wenham has an interesting comment: 'Time alone will tell to what extent the present neo-Pentecostal movement is of God.' (:34)

It is clear that Wenham takes ‘renewal’ to mean doctrinal renewal in the evangelical sense and his subsequent proposals for reuniting the churches in England hang around that premise:

This book is not an appeal to all Christian people to become traditional Conservative Evangelicals. But it is an appeal to return to basic Christian *theology* (Wenham’s emphasis)....so wholehearted that these fundamentals will reform all our traditions. This is the key to renewal and unity (:8).

Whilst Wenham can see little other ground as a basis for a future united church than through the lens of conservative evangelicalism, yet he notes the ‘wonderful openness’ among Christians to rethink their traditions. Perhaps this openness was part of what he sensed at the Nottingham Conference, but in his book he is writing eight years downstream and already he is reflecting upon a general pessimism that appeared to have come over the ecumenical movement since Nottingham. For example, he concludes chapter 1 with some sober reflections: ‘To many others Nottingham seemed to be a mountain-top experience, but the high hopes of those days were rapidly and cruelly eroded by the bitter realities of the ensuing years’. He mentions that attempts to get the Church of England to ‘covenant for union’ evoked no enthusiasm and were soon up against a brick wall. But he goes on to ask:

With half the time to 1980 (from 1964) already gone, the euphoria of Nottingham and the heady stuff talked there seems to have come to less than nothing. Was it a chimera or did God give us a glimpse of what he intended to do? (:12)

Wenham speaks here out of a spirit of understandable pessimism, and his question is heartfelt. But with the advantage of hindsight writing from a position over twenty years beyond the notional hoped for date of 1980 for a significant achievement in church unity, had the date suggested been 1990 instead of 1980 then much of the substance of Wenham’s hopes would have materialised. For example the 1987 Swanwick Declaration (see below) heralding a new commitment for a search for unity

was made and the 'New Ecumenical Instruments' were born; although at that stage they were bare bones. But their embryonic shapes were laid in the thinking and struggling of the 1960's and 70's. Wenham's expressed hope that, '... by Easter Day, 1980, Christian unity and renewal will have proceeded farther than most of us dreamt in 1964'(:12) was not off course, but about a decade too optimistic.

### **2.3 (2) Nottingham 1977 – Anglican Evangelicals on Unity.**

Five years after Wenham published his book, the Anglican Evangelicals themselves held a second National Congress at Nottingham in April 1977. The first had been at Keele University Staffordshire in 1967 where the significant decision was made to commit themselves to the wider Church of England and to play a fuller part in the denomination's life. This was a major decision on direction. It was popular in those days for evangelicals to perceive the Church of England as being largely unfriendly to them but 'the best boat to fish from'. Previously there had been a groundswell of thought among the C of E evangelicals that they might abandon the denomination and link up with other denominational evangelicals to form a new pan-evangelical church (sic. 'evangelical restorationism'). The decision to stay in and 'throw open the windows' to the wider denomination was effectively an ecumenical decision, and probably a prophetic one. Church history shows that attempts to form 'pure' churches have often been the route to new sectarianism and inevitably they move in an ecumenically reverse direction. So in plenary, they agreed a final statement: *The Nottingham Statement* (1977: 40). They were able to say: 'As Anglicans, holding to the Church of England's historic reformed stance, we also believe that to attempt to gather a 'pure' church is not only impossible as a task but also contrary to our biblical understanding of the visible church'.

Already one can see that wider points of consensus, agreed from broader ecumenical discussion had taken root among evangelicals. Visible unity had to be primarily local, have a common baptism, and a common confession of faith. Holy Communion required an open Lord's table and mission demanded working in harness. What was notably bold was the call to merge denominational structures to the point where there ceased to be any concept of 'each other' but only a common life of all. This unity should be marked both by a common acceptance of the authority of Scripture and by a rich diversity of expression. This latter point on legitimate diversity has been the focus of much discussion in recent years across the widest spectrum. It is a key ecumenical issue.

The Evangelicals also addressed another key issue, which has dogged English ecumenical dialogue for decades: the Church of England's own historical position as an Established Church. This often causes it to operate out of a sense of its own historical precedence. There is also the admission that the decision of Anglican Evangelicals to 'stay in' may have distanced some Free Church evangelicals (para. L3):

We deplore the tacit triumphalism that marks so much of the Church of England's public institutional life, and we wish to see this cease. We recognise that our historic constitutional links with the State, while valued by many of us, are a cause of concern to others and that we have often been insensitive to the offence they have caused to some non-Anglicans.

But there is recognition that to 'opt in' ecumenically and denominationally may well distance others, for whom movement towards a united church is felt as a challenge to their own gospel mission (L4: 41). 'We recognise that there are some Free Church evangelicals who view such a goal as harmful to the gospel and may be hindered by their independent view of the church from taking part in any proposed steps towards it.'

The report does not specify these Free Church Groups, but undoubtedly, the Federation of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC) would be in mind with associated churches of a similar ecclesiology. 'Independence' is thought of as a vital component of the polity of these churches' ability to preserve not just the purity of the church but the purity of the gospel itself. To be 'free' is to have the freedom to guard 'truth' as much as freedom to order one's own life and worship.

This paragraph in the report, concludes by mentioning the importance of 'black churches', which were being established in significant numbers by 1977; formed largely by new residents and their children born in the British Isles from the Afro-Caribbean groups. For a variety of reasons, some obvious, these churches formed separate groups quite quickly. The statement recognises their existence, and hints that the ecumenical enterprise embraces all professing Christian groups. There is thus a tacit implication that ecumenism cannot in any final sense be limited to the five largest denominations. (It is of interest to note that Churches Together in England (below) is aware not to let its course be largely set by the largest five churches: Baptist, United Reformed Church, Roman Catholic Church, Methodist Church and the Church of England.)

It is affirming for this thesis to read (L5) the statement of the importance of the charismatic movement:

We see a particular ecumenical significance in the charismatic movement, especially in its strong witness to the primacy of God, and of the knowledge of God in all Christian enterprises...In various ways, we are indebted to the Charismatic Movement in our own spiritual insights and priorities (just as, in various ways, many of us also have question marks to place over some of the teaching and emphases associated with it.) We welcome the publication of the recent agreement between 'charismatic' and other Anglican evangelicals (Smail1977) and wish to live and work together from now on without any sense of the 'them and us' to which both sets have often been accustomed

This statement accepts that the Charismatic Movement as a phenomenon has clearly taken root within the Church of England. It is also noteworthy that its ecumenical



significance is owned without the reasons being spelt out. (Wenham, above, was uncommitted). The primacy of God may be a reference to His sovereignty in spiritual experience and a hint that all traditions have some knowledge of God. It may mean no more than that charismatic experience has clearly been observed to cross-denominational boundaries. There are also clues that some evangelicals are still keeping an open mind on charismatic matters.

In the late 1970's Colin Buchanan moved the Church of England General Synod to commission a report into the Charismatic Movement in the Church of England. It was published in 1981, and among the many fruits of the movement is mentioned cross-fertilisation.

'It is likely that the charismatic movement brings missing dimensions to some of the existing traditions in the church. To the evangelical, it brings a release from negative attitudes to sacramentalism, and the created order... The evangelical may also be delivered from his fear of Rome, and thus share in worship and activities with Roman Catholic charismatics, on a basis of true mutual acceptance rather than fierce hostility. To the Catholic (whether Anglican or Roman) the movement has often brought the Bible to life. It has broken its formal and liturgical bounds, and come into the life of the congregation and individual with a vividness and power, which has astonished the recipients. On the other hand, the critic is still free to say that charismatics duck the harder intellectual task of Christian discipleship.' (1981:39)

This Anglican paragraph paints a picture of possibilities for the charismatic renewal to be the energising shaper of a visible church unity, although the compilers probably had in mind also the better integration and deeper unity of the various strands within Anglicanism. Because of the unique history of the Church of England with its claim to be both Catholic and Reformed, it posits interesting questions of church order, loyalty and authority. There are many who sit uneasily to this 'bridge' concept and probably several of the early Charismatic Independent groups had their origins in disaffected Anglicans, more 'purist' in mind, who were prepared to break with the parent body over these kind of issues. Nevertheless, the Charismatic Renewal movement within the Church of England has quietly grown numerically, but become

somewhat diluted and quieted (cf. CCR in chapter 2). It is an interesting question as to whether modern Anglican charismatics duck the harder intellectual tasks of Christian discipleship. Failure of Charismatics to square up intellectually may have resulted in loss of faith and church membership for some, particularly if their original conversion and/or spirit baptism was too simplistically nurtured. When mature questioning sets in for an individual, it can uproot a faith that has insufficient intellectual grounding.

Hollenweger, in his introduction to Hocken *Streams of Renewal* (1986), uses a similar style of language to say:

'the baptism of the Spirit introduces a critical and cognitive element into the evangelical and liberal camp. Evangelicals discover that it is possible to be a committed and spirit-filled believer without accepting evangelical theological propositions. Critical liberals discover that the oral evangelical tradition is a vehicle of communication, which can carry important ecumenical and social insights in a milieu, which the liberals can never reach. Catholics discover that there might be a possibility to be a fully fledged 'catholic' without accepting the jurisdiction of Rome. Protestants discover that Roman Catholic priests take Scripture and in fact the Reformation tradition just as seriously as they do.'

At the time of the 1977 Conference, the Church of England was officially involved in the Ten Propositions talks, which spawned the idea of five Churches Covenanting for Unity, and it only just failed to gain sufficient support. But however affirming the Nottingham Evangelicals were about ecumenism, alarm bells were ringing which partly explain why ecumenism slid down in priority on some groups' agendas.

We welcome the Ten Propositions on Church Unity and particularly the whole project of multilateral talks from which they spring. We fear lest the actual progress they offer towards visible unity may be so slow that consideration of them may be overtaken by boredom and incredulity, by a reaction against all church structures or by financial extremity, decline in membership and collapse of morale in any or all of the churches involved. (*Nottingham Statement*. Section L6)

Although the initial scheme failed, the groundwork put in yielded positive fruit within a decade at the Swanwick Declaration in 1987.

Thus what emerged in the late 70s and 80s was a pragmatically realistic attitude towards ecumenism which was neither optimistic nor pessimistic. It bred a realism that serious church unity goals were only going to be achieved through a painstaking and slow process that guaranteed some progress at a cost. The latter cost might be a relegation or sidelining of unity matters as a priority. More urgent concerns such as financial survival of denominations and evangelism in a post-modern age were to prove the issues of deepest anxiety throughout the 1980's and 1990's and up to the millennium. Hence there was something prophetic in the above statement, even to a growing 'a –denominationalism' among the younger generation and the sitting light to all church structures.

The Nottingham report went on to invite those who were involved in the Ten Propositions' discussions to consider that from an 'accepted date' the ordained ministries of any participating church should be recognised. It asked that the discussions should reject anything comparable to the 'bete-noire' (my term) of the old Anglican-Methodist 'Service of Reconciliation' which implied, if one looked at it through one lens, that Methodist ministers were being re-ordained into 'proper' Anglican orders. The implication was clear with the 'Service of Reconciliation', that the Methodists had finally conceded to take episcopacy into their system as first requested by Fisher's 1948 Cambridge University sermon: '...we do not believe that such 'recognition' is compatible with any rite that would imply that they were *not* 'ordained ministries'. (:42) (emphasis original). Discussion concerning the 'recognition of ministries' became one of the key components of ecumenical thinking in the 1990s. Nevertheless the Nottingham statement goes on to speak positively of episcopacy (: 42,43)

We value episcopacy, as understood in the Church of England, ... We would wish to retain episcopacy in any union of churches, but we do not think that it is essential for

the existence of the church, or that it is in all cases the means by which ordination should be conducted, and we consider that the current Anglican practice of episcopacy ought to be reformed.

This is something of a courageous attempt at reshaping episcopacy. It boldly states the belief of this group of evangelicals that episcopacy is of the ‘bene esse’ of the church rather than of the ‘esse’ (see chapter 4)

Finally, in section L7 there is a strongly worded plea that echoes the opening sentiment in L1 that unity must be visible and *local* (emphasis mine)

Independently of the Ten Propositions, we believe that the denominations could and should do more to make the ecumenical stance credible and substantial. At the local level, we are glad that there are already many informal expressions of ecumenical co-operation and fellowship. Yet much more needs to be done, and many feel that further ecumenical effort should be concentrated locally. Therefore, we pledge ourselves to seek ways of joining with neighbouring churches in structuring together our congregational lives in united worship and mission and in the joint use of buildings, money and pastoral resources.

This local emphasis was already ground reality in the concept of the Local Ecumenical Project (LEP). In 1977 there were about 200 of these in England, and their number was to grow considerably over the next few years. These ‘areas of ecumenical experiment’ as they were initially called, began to influence the thinking of the next generation of ecumenical leaders, and became a significant pressure factor in ecumenical thinking.

The next very brief chapter in the Nottingham Report focuses on the Roman Catholic Church and takes the form of an open statement which is clearly an affirmation and invitation to dialogue. Having welcomed the ecumenical task in the previous chapter, the report focuses on the specific issues with the Roman Catholic Church that Anglican Evangelicals still see as important if full unity is to be achieved. (see Appendix 2 for the full text). Thus the Anglican Evangelicals of 1977 demonstrated a clear and sincere commitment to the ecumenical enterprise.

## **2.4 The Inter-Church process 1984 to 1987.**

Whilst 'oikoumene' refers to worldwide fellowship, there is an Anglo-centric viewpoint taken in this thesis. This is not without good reason since it has been principally in Britain since 1964 (see BCC Conference, above) and especially in England that a special effort for unity at the local level has resulted in a new impetus for visible Christian unity at all levels. *Called to be One* (1996) summarised in its introductory paragraphs this 'local into national' historical process from the British Council of Churches in 1942 through to 1982. Over 50 years the BCC had built up a great deal of respect for its theological work, conferences, publications and not least, its high quality of personnel. But in 1982, for the first time in 25 years, there were no unity discussions anywhere in progress. (see Appendix 3)

This 1982 pause of pessimism was punctuated by the visit of Pope John Paul II to the United Kingdom in the same year. This encouraged conversations between the third major Christian community in England, the Roman Catholic Church, and the member churches of the British Council of Churches. In 1983 the Inter-Church process began, when Archbishop Runcie called various church leaders to Lambeth Palace in the wake of the collapse of the Covenant for Unity. This led in turn to the establishment in 1984 of the Inter-Church Meeting, which brought together not only the three largest Christian traditions in England, but also a wide range of other churches including the Orthodox, the Lutheran and some African and Afro-Caribbean Independent, Pentecostal and Holiness churches. The Inter-Church Meeting initiated the Inter-Church process, 'Not Strangers But Pilgrims', including the 1986 Lent course, 'What on Earth is the Church For?' in which nearly a million people took part in Radio based House Groups. This was followed by three 1987 national conferences in England (Nottingham), Wales (Bangor) and Scotland (St.Andrews). It was sincerely

believed that the Inter-Church Process represented a new and positive way to move the churches forward from the frustration and discouragement of the previously failed attempts at union schemes. So it turned out to be. The process culminated in a major British and Irish Conference at Swanwick, Derbyshire, at which the Swanwick Declaration was adopted by acclaim and personally signed by those present on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1987. Swanwick 1987 will probably go down in ecumenical history as one of its pivotal moments, especially as it led directly to the formation in 1990 of Churches Together in England and similar bodies in Wales and Scotland in 1990 (see Appendix 1 for full text). Swanwick may well be seen in historical hindsight, as the result of an ecumenical initiative from ‘the top’ meshing with the ecumenical enthusiasm from the grassroots. What emerged from Swanwick called for engagement and commitment from the churches at the right level. It honoured the various histories and convictions, which gave churches their identities, including the smaller ones, and yet it required them to take possible and measurable steps forward. The importance of the Swanwick Declaration lies in the fact, that it has set the new shape and methodology of British ecumenism for the coming years. The Declaration holds together some important balances and opposites. The language is neither superficial on the one hand, nor theologically honed to dryness on the other. It acknowledges the conviction that the Holy Spirit has probably had a hand in the whole conference, including the shaping of the final commitment which was urged on the churches. There is no trace of strident arrogance, on the part of any individual church, about its claims to be more ancient, orthodox, infallible or whatever. There are no minority exception clauses. The scope of the declaration is broad: ‘...the broadest assembly of British and Irish churches ever to meet in these islands’, and yet it acknowledges the existence of other Christian churches and groupings not yet

represented within the process. The hoped for unity must embrace all those who name the name of Christ. The word 'pilgrimage' has taken fresh root in the consciousness of churches during the last seventeen years. The Declaration mentions unity as a gift of God and thus, in a low-key way, one might label the Swanwick process 'charismatic'. The unity that is spoken of here has a double dimension: it is seen in the guidance of God, the Holy Spirit, in the processes leading up to the Conference, i.e. in the act of leading the churches forward to the conference table. Secondly it is seen as a heightened experiential unity at the actual conference. ('We have truly experienced this gift, growing amongst us in these days').

## **2.5 The authority of Swanwick**

There was clearly an authority to the Swanwick 1987 Conference, since it was an official conference at which the churches were authentically represented; and its call to the great mass of English churches to do something was heeded. The Declaration urged church leaders and representatives not only to present the report to their churches' appropriate decision making bodies but also to present along with it *developed proposals for ecumenical instruments to help the churches of these islands to move ahead together*. (emphasis mine) (*Called to be One* 1996:2)

This specific call was actually heeded and it led on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1990 to the formation of Churches Together in England (CTE) and Churches Council for Britain and Ireland (CCBI). These new 'instruments' had the status of committed covenants. They were taken seriously, signed up to and up until the time of writing they have been honoured. The CTE basis of commitment was as follows:

Churches Together in England unites in pilgrimage those churches in England which, acknowledging God's revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and in obedience to God's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit commit themselves:

To seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is His body and to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by

common witness and service in the world to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit’.

The basis of CTE, looked at calmly, is something near to the miraculous. It provided a basis of doctrine which was both verbally economical and yet neither doctrinally minimalist. It is Christ centred and Trinitarian. It contains clear clues to the methodology of seeking unity: pilgrimage. CTE is not a union scheme in and of itself. It seeks pilgrimage together on what ought to be converging paths. It acknowledges the direction of the Holy Spirit, and calls each denomination to renewal. (deepening of communion. cf *koinonia* chapter 3)

Although the prime location for fashioning the ecumenical structural unity has been England and Great Britain, yet the process envisaged in *Called to be One* sounded a call beyond the British Isles. ‘The question of ‘what kind of unity’, is one facing humanity as a whole. The church understands itself to be the place where the Spirit sustains a profound unity in the midst of all the diversities, as a sign and instrument of reconciliation in the world. Mission and Unity belong together. The Gospel of the reconciliation of our divided and sinful world to God, and consequently to itself, can credibly be preached only by a church faithfully reflecting the unity and love of God.’ (*Called to be One* 1996:3 para.1.6)

CTBO also adds, from the Santiago Faith and Order Conference of 1993: ‘We say to the churches ‘there is no turning back, either from the goal of visible unity, or from the single ecumenical movement that unites concern for the unity of the Church and concern for engagement in the struggles of the world’ (*On the Way to Fuller Koinonia* 1994:225)

Thus far, I have outlined some of the main landmarks of modern ecumenical history in the British Isles, and outlined the process of co-operation and convergence that is now operating under the New Ecumenical Instruments. One now moves on to the key



question: in the midst of these new ecumenical moves, where might one find the charismatics?

## **2.6 Charismatics engaging with ‘official’ ecumenism**

If charismatic renewal is being tested for its ecumenicity, where and how might charismatics (and especially the leaders) impact the ecumenical movement? Charismatic Renewal by definition, is the appearance of Pentecostal phenomena within historic denominations. So there is some inevitable engagement of charismatics and non-charismatics, whenever individuals experience Spirit Baptism and remain within their denominations. If charismatics are to make an impression, they will certainly have to engage in the normal denominational pastoral and management processes. This is discussed in detail for the Catholics in chapter 2. But in general charismatics may need enlightening, not only to recognise their unique potential to make an ecumenical impression, but even prior to this, of the importance of engaging ecumenically at all.

So where might one locate the areas where charismatic renewal could have an influence upon the official ecumenical processes? I suggest five immediate locations:

**a. ‘Professional’ ecumenists** (in the sense that working ecumenically is part of their official job description), who happen to be charismatics. There are undoubtedly many whose commitment to the search for unity is born out of a sincere inner conviction which could be engendered by a call of the Spirit. I have not attempted a survey on this, but know from first hand contacts that many County Ecumenical Officers would identify themselves as ‘charismatic’. There would be others who would decline the label but still acknowledge a spiritual motive in engaging ecumenically. Owning the label ‘charismatic’ for a particular individual, may not mean much more than it being one ingredient among many that seemed important, but

that is not to deny the real authenticity and importance of the charismatic ingredient in the particular individual's total theological outlook.

**b. Theologians.** There are undoubtedly individual members of the key international ecumenical dialogues who would have been happy to be labelled: 'charismatic'. e.g. in the Vatican/Pentecostal dialogues there were participants on both sides who were influenced at first hand by their charismatic experiences; and given the several international dialogues that are or have been recently current, one can be sure that there has been a great deal of serious theology done by those of a charismatic spirituality. The reshaping of their theological approaches as a direct result of charismatic renewal is looked at in greater depth in Chapter 5.

**c. Actual churches 'signed up' to Churches Together in England, which are charismatic in ethos.** These would include the Icthus Fellowship (sought membership of CTE and were accepted in 1995). This latter church is the first of the newer independent Restorationist churches to sign up. Some of the Black Majority churches joined CTE at its inauguration. For example: the Cherubim & Seraphim Council of Churches (whose leaders are styled 'bishop'), the Council of African & Afro-Caribbean Churches, the International Ministerial Council of Great Britain, the Joint Council for Anglo-Caribbean Churches, the New Testament Assembly. In recent years the Southam Road Evangelical Church Banbury has signed up to CTE. This latter single independent church may or may not be charismatic in ethos, but I include it here to illustrate that Churches Together in England is intended to link not only the large denominations but also the single congregation.

**d. The charismatics within the main denominational churches.** All the main denominations will have within them a fair number of charismatically styled Christians. I estimated that the ordained ministries of the main denominations might

well have something between 10-20% of their ministers who might identify with charismatic renewal. This estimate is based on personal encounters with many ministers of several denominations over many years. In the early days of charismatic renewal, (1960s to 1970s) there seemed a tendency to be more self –conscious and enthusiastic when owning charismatic experience. In the last thirty years it has tended to become ‘one component among others’ for individuals’ spirituality.

The influence of these ministers, as far as promoting the unity of the church is concerned, will be significant, and likely to be centred at the local level. In the gatherings of local churches in towns, it is likely that ‘unity in the spirit’ will be the prior spur to any local theological work. Local unity is likely to be both ‘spiritual’ and ‘institutional’.

**e. The religious ecumenical communities.** These contain people from a spread of theological and ecclesiastical traditions but who seem drawn into community by a conviction of God. They have a particular witness to unity. Some have grown up contemporaneously with Charismatic Renewal, some as a direct result of Charismatic Renewal like the Bugbrooke Community in Northants. (now closed). Rostrevor and Corrymeela in particular in Northern Ireland have significance in that they bridge the Protestant-Catholic divide in a land split along sectarian lines of the same name. Maranatha as a ground movement is an attempt to hold together a focus of Renewal, Mission, and Unity mainly in Prayer Groups. Other communities such as Iona and Taizé make interesting comparisons.

The importance of the communities is that they provide microcosm ecclesial models of unity being worked out in small groups. By observing the dynamics and theological integration and/or tensions of smaller groups it will be possible to draw some conclusions about how Christian unity might look on a macro scale.

Any one of these five areas could provide a subject for more detailed study, but they are grouped together here to sketch the wider scene. Measuring the ecumenical effect of charismatics in these five areas is not an exact science, but observation over time may be significant.

## **2.7 Summary**

This chapter has traced historically the ecumenical inclinations of some Anglican Evangelicals from the mid 1960s, focusing on their alternative ways out of the collapse of the original Anglican–Methodist Union scheme, and the collapse of the Ten Propositions for Unity. The post Keele 1967 Anglican Evangelicals not only committed themselves more fully into the wider denomination, but they also developed a positive ecumenical attitude, developing fresh theological thinking. Furthermore they began to see in the Charismatic Movement a serious contributor to ecumenism.

The thinking and energy that seemed initially to have been wasted in the collapsed schemes, provided the groundwork for the inauguration in 1990 of the New Ecumenical Instruments. These instruments have moved the ecumenical movement in the British Isles on to new frontiers beyond anything previously achieved; and evangelicals have played a major part in them. But even these new frontiers have a large gap between themselves and the final goal of a visibly united church. How far charismatics themselves, will self-consciously play a major part in ecumenical advance is still an open question. The next chapter will look at this specific question in relation to the Roman Catholic Church

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **ROMAN CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL**

#### **3.1 The Beginnings after 1967**

In *This is The Day* (1979) the Anglican Charismatic pioneer, Michael Harper, devotes a whole book to set out a vision for visible Christian Unity, and he does so with an obvious sincerity and credibility. His methodology goes beyond an evangelical ‘stretching his boundaries a little’, in a similar manner to Wenham (chapter 1). He takes a full plunge of theological commitment, based upon what he has observed and experienced from a Charismatic viewpoint. Harper believes that one of the main purposes of renewal could be to offer a new ecumenism. This is not an alternative ecumenism to the official denominational variety, for he clearly owns, that at some point the realised ecumenism of experience must engage with the hard process of ‘round the table’ ecumenism. But Harper takes the Roman Catholic Church seriously, in a way, which most evangelicals could never quite manage, and does not see the ecumenical solution in Catholics quietly becoming quasi-evangelical. Thus he says, ‘For some people the most difficult aspect of this book to accept will undoubtedly be the Roman Catholic world’ (:105). The fact that Harper is prepared not simply to stop there, but hints at an eventual unity with Orthodoxy (:52), is an indication that he sees a crucial importance for the credibility of the gospel in a clearly re-united church. He also says astoundingly that some communist thinkers regard the ecumenical movement as a formidable danger to its own ideology. ‘*It (communism) fears a united Christendom more than some Christians desire it.*’ (: 104) (emphasis original)

So given Harper's enthusiastic vision from the Anglican Evangelical side of the fence, is his vision confirmed or cautioned by the vision that Charismatic Catholics have themselves on the issue of reunion?

This Chapter looks at Roman Catholic charismatic renewal from its own internal viewpoint. The Reformation divide of the sixteenth century, is without doubt, one of the great ruptures of the church, whose consequences are still very much with us. It is a chasm which has been significantly crossed theologically in recent years, with the publication of the Catholic-Lutheran Joint Declaration on Justification (1997). The Holy Spirit is seen as playing a crucial role: 'Faith is itself God's gift through the Holy Spirit who works through word and sacrament in the community of believers...' (sec.3 para.16). But even though there is a first theological bridge in place; how significant is the charismatic renewal's experiential bridge, as a harbinger of the eventual crossing the chasm, as is indicated in the Polish incident above.

This chapter has four sections: a study of the early days of CCR from 1967 onwards to detect any initial ecumenical leanings; a pilot fieldwork investigation into contemporary CCR; a look at the Alpha Course phenomenon and its ecumenical dimension. Lastly one tries to discern where the movement's future lies beyond 2007.

### **3.1.1 Early authors**

As mentioned in chapter 1: O'Keeffe (1980), O'Neill (1978), and Pickup (1976) overlapped considerably in their common concerns from the first decade or so of CCR. Issues of initiation were very much to the fore. The core issue was the same as that which challenged evangelicals: how to relate an apparently staged initiation of the Holy Spirit into an already given theological framework. For Protestants it was the relation of Baptism of the Spirit to conversion. For Catholics it was Baptism in the

Spirit to sacramental water baptism. The early Catholic charismatic authors struggled with it and to some extent still do. One example is Simon Tugwell, who in *Did you Receive the Spirit?* (1978) showed considerable scepticism over the attempts of CCR advocates to produce a satisfactory theology(: 8)

He says:

‘The danger of simply tacking Pentecostal bits on to the end of an otherwise unaffected Catholicism also needs to be underlined. The task of producing an integrated religion which is truly Catholic both in being whole and in being true to the faith of our fathers, still remains an essential one, and I am on the whole very disappointed at the attempts made so far within Catholic Pentecostalism.’ (: 8)

One needs to remember that this was only the end of the first decade of CCR, but the issues which surfaced were important, and have remained so. Tugwell’s main call was for a total integration of the renewal into the Catholic Church, both pastorally and theologically. He talks of ‘reintegrating all the bits and pieces of our fragmented tradition, and our lost wholeness.’(:38). He is primarily concerned with the ‘fragmentation of recent Catholicism’ (: 99), though he doesn’t expand on it. His ecumenism is a call for: ‘All the fragments of our experience, all the fragments of our world, are to be gathered into God’s wholeness’. (: 99). There is little of official ecumenical concern to him, and maybe because there is a subliminal assumption on the part of many Catholics about the given-ness of their own church. The term ‘separated brethren’ indicates that the departure lies with the latter rather than the former. Nevertheless he affirms that, ‘...in some way, they (separated brethren) already have their appointed place in the wholeness given in trust to the church’ (: 99) adding that ‘we need to learn from other Christians, as the Council taught, to further the full manifestation of our own catholicity’ (: 100). Muhlen (1979) concurs very much with Tugwell on this point but states it more positively. ‘There is *not one* of the now separated Churches where *all* the charisms of Jesus are active. The Catholic

church therefore expressly recognises that the effects of the Spirit active in other churches and ecclesial communities contribute to its own edification and that schism has made it difficult 'to express in actual life in all its aspects' the fullness of what Christ has bequeathed to us (*Decree on Ecumenism*, art.4.9f) (:121,122). Muhlen goes on to suggest that a freshly reconciled Christendom requires that: '...charismatic renewal must be Lutheran, Reformed, Orthodox, Catholic and so on, before it can be truly ecumenical' (:122), and in making a firm stand against what was rapidly becoming 'Restorationism', he adds: '*the dynamism of this renewal is not directed to a new charismatic super-church (Church of the Spirit), but to the one charismatically renewed Church.*' (:122) (emphases original).

But returning to initiation; the tension which Tugwell feels, is that between an experience which does not allow denial of itself, and an unacceptable theology such as the term 'Baptism in the Spirit' to describe it. Tugwell comes out firmly against the traditional Pentecostal interpretation. (see further discussion in chapter 4 on baptism). But in reaching forward to find a way past the difficulty, and this is where he is of ecumenical importance, says: 'In religion, there is a complex dialectical relationship between scripture, personal experience, and the context of our church fellowship, theological studies, and so on. This is a perfectly healthy process, and it is one of the ways in which the Holy Spirit leads the church into all truth...it is the living mediation of the deposit of faith given once and for all, by the operation of the Holy Spirit.' (:38). Tugwell puts his finger here on perhaps the key to the link between ecumenism and Charismatic Renewal. There is an ongoing revelatory process, which is at work through the church. It lives with its 'givens' in scripture, tradition, reason (emphasised by Anglicans) etc. but whatever formula a church might use to order these in any priority of authority; the Spirit is the final revelator and



interpreter (cf Francis Martin below). How this dialectical process works is complex as Tugwell describes, but very real and vital to the integrative (ecumenical) process. Provisionality in theology is one aspect of this. It comes through in Tugwell's criticism of Pentecostal theology of the Holy Spirit:

'It has so over-objectified one particular kind of experience of the Spirit, that it has almost no account to give of others. This means that when Pentecostals meet others who manifestly *do* (emphasis mine) know something of the Holy Spirit, they either have to claim them as already being 'baptised in the Spirit', which does not much help a person who is, perhaps, genuinely seeking some further inspiration and help from them. Or they deny that he is 'baptised in the Spirit', and implicitly deny the value of what he has already experienced....however advanced we may be...however mature spiritually, there is always more for us.' (:92)

So in 1978 Tugwell advocated dropping the term 'baptism in the Spirit'. However it has become, as Michael Harper has said, 'part of the settled vocabulary of renewal' (1979:64) The CCR as a whole has also accepted the phrase, as is apparent in any reading through of *Good News*. (see below)

### **Peter Hocken**

In contrast to Tugwell's slight pessimism concerning what CCR has achieved theologically so far, Peter Hocken has: 'It is not then surprising, that charismatics have seen this outpouring of the Spirit, as aimed at a renewal of the entire church of Christ, and as a force capable of breaking down the longest-standing ecclesiastical barriers.' (1986: 176):

In an essay in *New Heaven? New Earth?* (1976: 48f) he says:

It does not require great powers of perception to see that Pentecostalism has ecumenical significance. Any movement that brings together Assemblies of God and Roman Catholics in brotherhood and common worship has potential... Whilst Pentecostalism had an ecumenical component in its original dynamic, its expulsion or exodus from the Churches that gave it birth can be seen in retrospect to have a providential character. For secession and isolation enabled them to pursue their genius and develop a complete corporate life in fidelity to their basic inspiration; only because of this has pentecostal *otherness* developed so that seventy years later it can confront its elder brethren both as brother and as other....the ecumenical potential is latent in this combination of identity and otherness.

Hocken does not specify here the ‘Churches that gave it birth’. In a sense those Churches may have been purely incidental as a locus for that fresh work of the Spirit, which was Pentecostalism. His positive rationale for the separation of a movement from its parents is important and he may well be correct. On the other hand one must guard against using his rationale as a pretext for all separation and fragmentation. (see fuller discussion in chapter 5). Historically, new movements within the church need space to explore their identity, and only after they have discovered it are they able to work out how they relate to the wider body. Thus from a Catholic perspective, Hocken is willing to see a positive reason for the period of time separation where a movement can discover its basic *raison d’être*. When that movement matures it is then ready to re-engage with the parent that it separated from or rejected it. This is how he sees the period of Classical Pentecostalism in its separation from its early largely Protestant roots. He continues:

Its ecumenical potential becomes apparent at the point when it begins to penetrate the older traditions without simply luring their members out into Pentecostal assemblies or into groupings that sit light to their traditions of origin. (: 49)

Hollenweger is slightly more pessimistic. He sees a repetitive cycle of four phases in the ecumenical development of Pentecostalism (1997:355). In Phase 1, the movement is ecumenical grass roots. In phase 2 it is hardening into local groups heavily influenced by evangelical theology. Phase 3 sees the development of the movement as a collection of international denominations, organised and clerical. Phase 4 is a return to ecumenism involving dialogue with older denominations. This leads to breakaway groups who start the process over again at Phase 1. Can the outworking of Hocken’s insight of ‘identity and otherness’ move the latent ecumenism into realised ecumenism? (Pickup, in her thesis (:27) also notes Hollenweger’s cycle as significant). In effect this is one of the main questions of the present study: can

Hollenweger's Phase 4 move from dialogue into a genuine new creation? John Habgood (1983:151) says:

An imperative towards ecumenism based on the doctrine of reconciliation...is both compelling and broad....compelling because it is rooted in the heart of the Gospel; broad because reconciliation is never a mere return to some supposed earlier state of harmony, but is nothing less than new creation; and who can say what that will be until it happens?

The charismatic movement has generally meant, for every denomination that has tasted it, an inevitable encounter/dialogue of the theology of classical pentecostalism with its own received tradition. Here is the key creative tension and the ecumenical potential. Many of the early charismatics were content to enjoy experience with those of a similar experience rather than begin to let the experience challenge received theology and traditions; and reciprocally to let the received Pentecostal theologies be challenged by those of older denominations. Hocken (:64) uses the term 'double loyalty' to describe those involved both in charismatic renewal and also holding a strong denominational identity. He has in mind primarily Catholic charismatics like himself who have to live with the creative tension passing through themselves. Such people stand sincerely within the context of their own denomination, whilst simultaneously embracing and recognising the authenticity of the charismatic dimension that they have personally experienced. The concept of double loyalty brings with it the temptation to 'relax the creative tension' (Hocken). The tension is the clue to what may be the fundamental and providential process of God; not simply in its application to Catholic charismatic renewal in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but to all movements within the broad stream of Christian spirituality throughout church history.

**Emmanuel Sullivan**

Sullivan was formerly, in the 1970s, the Roman Catholic Ecumenical Officer for the Diocese of East Anglia, has written in *Baptised into Hope* (1980) of five parallel and related movements. Three are of immediate interest to this thesis: the Ecumenical Movement, the Catholic-Evangelical convergence, and the Neo-Pentecostal Movement (which term he prefers to 'charismatic movement'). He sees a coming convergence of these movements (:31,32), and is forthright on the role that neo-Pentecostalism has to play in ecumenism. 'It has now become a personal conviction of mine that it has an essential role to play in ecumenism.' (:147). Like Hocken, he is positively providential about the separated movements of the church. In the *Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology* (1983:126) he says:

Recognition must be given to the continuing activity of the Holy Spirit over long periods of separation among churches.. As various Christian churches sought to reform and renew themselves in fidelity to the gospel, the Holy Spirit granted certain valid insights and spiritual gifts proper to authentic Christian life. Subject to spiritual discernment, such gifts and insights may well be intended for the future life *of a visibly united church* (emphasis mine)

He notes that there is also a tendency for charismatic renewal to be divisive as well as unitive: 'creating a kind of first and second class church membership' (:148). He puts this down to theological error or spiritual immaturity, stemming mainly from the tendency of the neo-Pentecostals to take onboard uncritically the language of the classical Pentecostals to understand their very real spiritual experience. Here Sullivan is chiming with Hocken again, in recognising the basic theological problem to be addressed. He advocates the process of renewal to push beyond an initial Pentecostal experience to a spirituality that reflects the very nature of the Church as an institution born of God's Spirit. At the heart of charismatic renewal a new stance is created in the heart of the believing Christian, which results in a 'radical openness to God as the present living source of spiritual love and power...the experience is one either of

release that comes from the activity of the Spirit within one's self or of an infilling of the Spirit from beyond one's self.' (:149).

Such an attitude of openness to God and consequently the future, offers the possibility of a truly pilgrim church, one which is pliable, directable and whilst remaining in continuity with its past, is not absolutely determined by it. (:155)

'It would be a mistake to talk about the integration of any movement into a closed Church, a Church convinced of its own final and fully formed entity....the Church is conditioned by its history. To be faithful to God it must remain unconditionally open to its future and not condition its hope by a precipitous, unthinking determination of what its life must be in the future.'

Sullivan is talking of the same phenomenon: the 'complex dialectical relationship' advocated above by Tugwell. The challenge to the Roman Catholic Church (and others) is how to position itself institutionally as open to a new future and pliable to the Spirit.

Thus far, taken together, Tugwell, Muhlen, Hocken and Sullivan paint an emerging picture of a charismatically renewed and re-uniting church.

**Edward O' Connor** (1971) has written a very factual, thought provoking and analytical account of the beginnings of Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal. It may have been prophetic or just co-incidental that Pope John XXIII called for a 'new Pentecost' in May 1959. It was just twelve months after the close of Vatican 2 in December 1965 that the Catholic charismatic renewal began in February 1967 at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Within a month the renewal had spread to the student body at the University of Notre Dame in Michigan State. From the start it seems that the catholic renewal was left to find its own way. It was born in a seminary culture and was approached in a constructively self-critical way. In his focus on the initial experience of the prayer-groups, O'Connor describes an important change of gear that took place after the initial phase. (see Ranaghan below). At the

beginning, the participants found that the Spirit seemed to maintain order and balance, and in an empirical way knit together the various members. After a while it seemed good to believe that ‘the Holy Spirit was not going to continue permanently maintaining harmony and agreement all by himself’ (:76). There was discovered a need for the exercise of reason and most importantly leadership and authority. The term ‘elder’ was loosely used for a while. It is interesting to note that what is described here could well be a microcosm of the kind of experience that the early church went through in its transition from charismatic to a more institutional ministry. e.g. In Acts of the Apostles 15, the Council at Jerusalem, ‘it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us’ the decision was both from the Spirit and via the leadership exercising thought and wisdom. Charism and institution are laid alongside each other in creative co-support. On this ‘stepping back of the spirit’, O’Connor adds this interesting paragraph (:87):

‘...the ordinary had to be integrated into the charismatic. A greater exercise of faith was required to realise that God was still sovereign. God often follows this pattern in his works. He begins with a glorious Pentecost, in which he alone does almost everything single- handily, in order to make it evident that it is his hand, and his alone that has produced the work. But when this has been established he turns the work over to men, and lets them carry it forward by their own activities, still helping and supporting them, but in a more invisible way.’

This insight promises a key in understanding phases of an individual denominational history, where things of a passing nature may have been hardened into dogma by later generations. O’Connor gives quite some space to tackling the key question of how classical Pentecostal theology and renewed experience can be made to relate to classical Catholic theology. In this exercise he looks for correspondences between the experience of some of the ‘greats’ which seem to be at his fingertips and contemporary Catholic Charismatics e.g. Augustine of Hippo, Chrysostom, Aquinas, Ignatius of Loyola, St. John of the Cross, and Therese of Lisieux.

## **Cardinal Suenens and the Malines Document 2**

Suenens was clearly the right man at the right time in the right place as far as the CCR was concerned. He was theologian, prelate and embraced the Charismatic renewal personally. He was also a principal architect of the Second Vatican Council and providentially placed to give leadership and a personal imprimatur on the CCR from the beginning. Reading through *A New Pentecost?* (1975) one gets the impression of a fairly conservative theologian, for whom charismatic renewal fits neatly into place within a fairly orthodox catholic theology. But his more focused work on ecumenism is in the Malines Document 2 (1978). Although the work bears his name, it is the product of a consultation which he called in 1974 of a small international team of theologians and lay leaders (:11). These included names which appear in the present study: e.g. Kilian McDonnell, Heribert Muhlen, Kevin Ranaghan, and Rene Laurentin. Thus the Malines Document 2 (MD) has a particular authority to it and represents something of a theological and pastoral benchmark, written just seven years after the beginnings of CCR in 1967. The MD frequently uses 'we'; and at the heart of the work it says: 'We believe that the CR is called to fulfil an ecumenical vocation, but we also believe that ecumenism will find in the Renewal a grace of spiritual deepening and, if necessary, a complement or a corrective.

We feel that the Holy Spirit is inviting us to understand the intimate meeting point of the two currents, which links them together like two branches of the same river, springing from the same source, washing the same banks and flowing down to the same sea.' (:89)

This statement on convergence is a good summary of the task of this present thesis. The word 'intimate' is a key to the study, since locked up in that word is the whole

process of CR taking churches back through their histories and to their roots; something essential if one is looking to investigate how the renewal can create ecumenical momentum. So Suenens sees the 20<sup>th</sup> century ecumenical movement, and the Pentecostal movement of the same century as both born of the same Spirit, and running on convergent paths.

The MD also owns a major principle which is music to the ears of many conservative evangelicals that ‘one cannot be a Christian by proxy... Each adult must say ‘Yes’ to the Baptism received as an infant’ (:59). This key ecumenical concept is discussed in Chapter 4 in the context of baptism. So far the MD is encouraging, but the deeper sticking points emerge as one unpacks how the MD understands ‘Unity’ (:94). Unity can be compatible with ‘a pluralism on the liturgical, canonical and spiritual planes’ (:98). The Church (RC) welcomes a plurality of theology provided the faith is ‘safe and intact’ (:98). But in defining ‘faith’ the MD states that a Catholic cannot be expected to deny essential points of his faith. (when engaging in ecumenical dialogue). For example: ‘a Christianity that accepts Christ, but not the Church, - the Word of God but not the living tradition, which sustains and vehicles his Word yet is wholly submissive to it, - the charisms of the Spirit, but not the ministerial and sacramental structure of the church’ (:100)

Remembering that the MD is written by Catholic Charismatics, this sounds very much like a defense of the Catholic Empire. On the whole they have worked out a stance which leaves the historical Roman Church largely intact. This in turn suggests something of an ecumenism that is very much a call ‘to return to the fold.’ On the other hand, there is a firmness of approach that cannot allow divisions of doctrine to be relegated simply as secondary issues (:99). Unity will not be the lowest common denominator. Unity is conceived as something that does not need to be created; it ‘is



both a gift and a task, a reality possessed and a reality to be pursued.’ (:98). The MD then uses the phrase that unity is to be recomposed ‘on the plane of visibility and history, and not in the heart of its mystery’ (:98). There is a clue here to what charismatic spirituality might offer by way of revealing the heart of its mystery. Is this what is beginning to be experienced when charismatics are gathered together? One major premise is revealed when discussing the prophetic nature of the church. ‘Just as Peter and the apostles in former days, today their successors, the Pope and the bishops, recapitulate and authenticate all the particular gifts that may appear in the Church.’ (:158,159). Clearly an *a priori* acceptance of a ‘Petrine ministry’ might be a step too far for many Protestants. One continually discovers reading through the MD, a dialectical swing between flashes of hopeful inspiration, which promise a breakthrough into new theological ground, which will untie all of the theological knots, and then that is followed almost immediately by ultra-conservative tones. This is a feature of ecumenical dialogue not confined to the MD.

The MD recognises the ecumenical potential of Pentecostalism from its beginnings. It sees in its rejection by its original churches the cause of its diversion from its ecumenical orientation in mission. Historically this leads to a confessional exclusiveness, marked by an aggressive over-emphasis on their particular tenets. (:111,112). It examples most ‘awakenings’ since the Reformation, Lutheran Pietism, the Quaker Movement and Methodism. It also mentions the Catholic Counter-Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries! (:112). But the MD then goes on to say that the current ‘Renewal in the Spirit is inviting all Christians to progress beyond these one sided accentuations, inherited from the past’ (:127) and then in language as accurately as it can describe, ‘For ecumenism does not aim to create a well-proportioned and homogenised admixture of all the Christian traditions, but to restore

pluriform unity among sister Churches possessing their specific features,...' (:127)

There is a caution against fundamentalistic interpretations of scripture (:153) but a positive note that, 'Ecumenism has everything to gain when Christians are brought together by using the various charisms that the Spirit grants to his Church.'(:155).

The MD also states a seminal principle which runs throughout the Catholic Renewal literature, that charism and institution should not be set in opposition to each other; a theme which runs like a musical base line throughout this study. '...the ministries and essential structures of the ecclesial community are, just as much as prophecy or glossolalia, gifts of the Spirit'(:127).

The MD brings together the fruit of a professional reflection on CCR just seven years after its birth. One notices that it has had a formative influence in the thinking of many individual catholic charismatic authors ever since.

**Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan** were influential leaders in the early CCR **and** their early theology somewhat speculative. Hence Dorothy has:

'The truth is that without the event of Pentecost and the ongoing reality of Pentecost there is no Church and there is no Christian life. Salvation without the coming of the Spirit would remain a mere historical event inaccessible to contemporary man.'  
(1971:6)

She is too close for comfort here to a statement, which brought the charge of neo-heresy against some early charismatics that 'real' Christians needed the Baptism in the Spirit to be real Christians at all. It is comparable to saying that the first disciples of Jesus were not 'real' Christians before Pentecost. Pentecost was certainly no mere 'add-on'. Even a superficial reading of the Acts of the Apostles shows that the apostles functioned in a new league of power and faith. But Pentecost needed the years of preparation and faith nurture before the apostles could be receivers of whatever was given at Pentecost to make them effective in mission. So a 'new'

experience of the Spirit may require its recipients to live patiently with a faithful dilemma for a period to allow time to throw fresh theological light on some of the more complex issues. In trying to work out a solution, Dorothy Ranaghan draws a subtle distinction between Christians as individuals and the Church as a body:

‘The truth is stronger. It is because the Spirit of Jesus dwells in the Church that she is truly the body of Christ. Only because she is enlivened by the Spirit can the Church continue to celebrate the paschal mystery of Christ in Word and sacrament, making the fullness of redemption present and effective in each generation. Only because of the operation of the Spirit in the Church can any man become a part of Jesus, share in his sonship...’(:6)

Yet the references to ‘any man’ and ‘inaccessible to contemporary man’ put the emphasis back onto individual salvation. There is a dilemma here, not only for Dorothy Ranaghan, but also for all charismatic theologians as they struggled to understand this new movement of the Spirit. It is the dilemma of owning, describing and positioning the new experience, whilst at the same time needing to find a positive rationale for all the religious experience that may have gone before in an individual’s life. (cf. Tugwell above)

Roman Catholics revere a powerful institutional church whose traditional theology seems an ecclesiological ‘given’. The conditioning framework, which seems to stay firmly in place for the Roman Catholic charismatics, is the sacramental one. Hence Dorothy Ranaghan can say: ‘The phrase ‘Baptism in the Holy Spirit’ which comes from Scripture has been used also among Pentecostal fundamentalists, who don’t have the sacramental theology necessary to relate it to baptism and confirmation’(:8).

Thus in Dorothy Ranaghan’s essay there is nothing to suggest that the sacraments for the Catholic charismatic are anything other than what Catholics are taught to believe as part of their normal upbringing. She therefore uses concepts, when referring to the Baptism in the Spirit, such as: ‘to actualise in a concrete and living way what the Christian people have already received...for us this ‘baptism’ is neither a new

sacrament nor a substitute sacrament; it is a prayer, similar to a renewal of baptismal promises, a renewal in faith of the desire to be everything that Jesus would have us to be' (:8). Nevertheless, she still leaves a sense of uncertainty as she feels her way forward to a theology of sacraments which will integrate the traditional and the new.

There are important ecumenical implications in their jointly authored book *Catholic Pentecostals* (1969). Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan extend their discussion of initiation into the Patristic age. Kevin looks at the roots of Spirit baptism in the New Testament Church and then goes on to look at developments in the Patristic church. His first key conclusion is that in the Patristic church, the giving of the Spirit to the individual was located liturgically and sacramentally within the totality of a single rite which contained several components. So for example, the candidates were, after preliminaries (which in itself suggests that the candidates were not infants) immersed three times in a water bath in the name of the Trinity, anointed all over with oil, received the laying on of hands with sometimes a signing on the forehead. They then received the Eucharist with the whole congregation. Kevin Ranaghan notes that some contemporary authors termed the whole process 'baptism'(:131). 'What is clear is that we have one event within which occurs simultaneously, if not indistinguishably, regeneration and the outpouring of the Spirit.'

He then summarises the first five centuries of the church by stating that the whole rite was baptism in the Holy Spirit. (:132). This is too general a comment to sweep over five centuries; but he also notes that it was during this period, as the church expanded throughout the Roman Empire that diversification of practice set in (a reverse kind of ecumenism) with the laying on of hands getting separated out as an act only for the bishop. (One main reason was the geographical separation of bishops from their

flocks in a church expanding geographically). Hence the historical fragmentation of baptism and confirmation which has run through to the present day.

### **3.1.2 The attenuation of the charismata in the Patristic age.**

But a more significant question emerges: what happened to the ‘charismatic life’ of the Patristic church? This great imponderable is significant, because it represents the reversing of the process that seems to be in operation in current times. Today the charismata are being recovered. Then they were apparently fading. Kevin Ranaghan:

‘In the New Testament, being filled with the Spirit resulted in ministries of healing, prophecy, discernment and speaking in tongues. Why don’t we hear of these gifts of the Spirit in connection with Christian baptism in the patristic era? This puzzling question has never been satisfactorily answered. Some considerations have been suggested in the past. All of them need investigation’ (:135)

From the second century of the church’s history it appears that the recording and expectation of charismatic phenomena was quietly fading into the shadows, leaving a formalised religious institution in its place. Kevin Ranaghan suggests six reasons why this attenuation of the charismata might have taken place:

First: ‘The offices within the church, from bishop to simple baptised were considered the work and appointment of the Holy Spirit and hence ‘charismatic’ (:135). One might deduce that the early church, as it became more institutionalised, and increased in numbers (see below) became steadily more dependent on ‘leadership from the front’. Such charismatic gifts as there were, became more focused on the leadership, and perhaps sowed the seeds of an exclusivity of possession of gifts. One only has to look at the growth of the larger style celebration worship events of today to witness this phenomenon. The ‘platform’ is in control and from there the gifts are largely operated.

Secondly Ranaghan adds: ‘...however, the offices within the Church by the patristic era, were becoming increasingly institutionalised, organised and controlled. While

properly thought of as the work of the Spirit, the intervention and guidance of the Spirit seemed more remote' (:135). In some contemporary charismatic renewal circles, there has often been a tendency to set the spiritual off against the institutional. The officially appointed ministries of the various churches have tended to be seen as part of the institutional (and hence 'deadening') in contrast to the more spontaneous and spiritual. (see discussion on 'charism and institution' in chapter 5).

Thirdly: 'The church as a whole was becoming socially acceptable and eventually established in the empire. This meant the further institutionalisation of the Church along imperial lines, and the entrance of local politics and factionalism into the government of the Church. This could have led to a further lack of openness in the Church to the gifts of the Spirit, in fact given but not received' (:135) (see discussion in chapter 4 on baptism).

Fourthly, he asks if the New Testament charismatic activity had a peculiarly eschatological significance. The charismata were very much tools of proclamation for the Kingdom. As the church settled to a more incarnational program the felt need for them may have diminished.

Fifthly: he suggests that the Church might have shied away from some of the gifts of the Spirit such as tongues, visions and prophecy, emphasised by some groups (e.g the Montanists) to the denial of the gifts of authority, judgement and government.

Nevertheless, Ranaghan concludes that it would be incorrect historically to think of them as 'dying out' He cites references to visions, dreams, prophecies in Augustine's city parish in Hippo. 'The New Testament gifts did in fact continue in the Spirit-filled Church in the patristic, medieval and modern periods, although not at all times and in all places.'(:136). Taken together, the suggestions outlined here paint a plausible

scenario for the attenuation of the charismata, and a largely institutionally shaped Church gained the ascendancy from the patristic era onwards.

JV Taylor has an important reference here in *Go-Between God* (1972:208) referring to the attenuation of the charismata. He says:

‘The change, I suggest, was due to the determined attempt to institutionalise the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. Instead of being the creative Lord and initiator of all the communal responses of the church, he is treated as a thing – a force to be manipulated, a fluence to be placed at the disposal of bishops and priests and dispensed sacramentally and in no other way.’

Yet Ranaghan adds one more reason to his list and this may well have had far deeper and far reaching effects than his other suggestions; not so much as why the charismata faded from view, but why the growing institutionalism took over. He cites indiscriminate infant baptism:

‘As kings and chieftains embraced Christianity, often from political and economic motives as well as from personal conversion, their peoples followed ‘en masse’. Adequate instruction was all too rare. Church historians seem sure that vast numbers of persons were baptised indiscriminately without understanding what they were doing or the demands of a life turned to Jesus’ (:137).

Thus Ranaghan identifies the effect of indiscriminate baptism upon the way the practice of Christianity was perceived in Europe of the six, seventh and eighth centuries. It becomes easy to see how the concept of ‘Christendom’ and Christian states emerged. Not only have the charismata faded from view, in a church that has become formalised, but the church itself has now merged its formal boundaries with the state by the process of baptising the population at birth. (Appendix 8). Wessels in *Europe: was it ever really Christian?* (1994), studies the importance of folk religion and pagan syncretism as it connects with ‘nominal Christianity’. (See also: Davie 2002)

The centuries since the Protestant Reformation have seen the slow reversal of the process which set-in in the early medieval centuries. The church has recovered its

sense of separateness from the earthly state, and has through various theological and spiritual upheavals begun to recover its spiritual 'otherness'. In the Anglican Church, the Oxford Movement (circa 1830) for example, was significant here in rebutting charges of Erastianism, the idea of the church as a department of state (see Buchanan 1994).

Given this later historical development, it becomes easier to see the significance of the process that has been set in motion by the outworking of the experience of charismatic renewal in an historic and traditional denomination. Charismatic Renewal in the church, effects a kind of 'peeling back the layers of the onion' to reach the ancient roots. This operates not only in a historic sense but also puts the denomination back into touch with its root spirituality. (see Hocken chapter 5 on this process). It is easy to glimpse the potential of what might happen if the leadership is patient with what might be emerging in the course of the renewal, and the denomination is willing to support the process.

### **3.1.3 Prayer groups and Catholic culture:**

One of the main new fruits that emerged from the CCR, was that of the prayer group. This in turn led on to an understanding that the church was being rediscovered as community. One needs caution lest it be thought that a transformation took place in the mindset of the Roman Catholic church within a short space of time post 1967. Clearly it did not. Charismatic Renewal has the *potential* (emphasis mine) to transform a denomination's mindset, but there is no guarantee. Visions may be glimpsed, but within a short time dimmed or lost altogether. Nevertheless, the evidence is there from early testimony (post 1967) that a rediscovery of experienced 'community' was beginning.



Whilst the place of house-groups and Bible Study Groups is now common place throughout most Christian denominations, they did not emerge, certainly in the Church of England, until the 1950s. For the vast majority of worshipping Anglicans, 'being loyal' to church meant Sunday attendance, putting in a weekly money offering, and helping out with church social functions. To make a unique occasion in midweek to pray and study the Bible was culturally rather unusual. It signified a leap in commitment, which was beyond the common expectation. It was different in evangelical churches where a weekly meeting for prayer and Bible study had been in place for a century or more.

So when one looks at popular Roman Catholic culture with its much stronger emphasis (than in Anglicanism) on attendance at weekly mass, preceded by confession, a movement which groups people and causes them to relate in a new way to each other, is highly significant and transforming. Catholics would normally attend mass as individuals, and then disperse quickly as soon as they have 'received'. There appears little sense of need to linger for 'fellowship' after individual duty is done.

For Catholics, a deeper level of religious commitment means a call to the 'religious life' in an order as monk or nun. This brief culture sketch is important as background, in order to note the impact that charismatic renewal had started to make within Catholic circles. In his essay: *Life in Community* Ralph Martin puts it simply: 'It is essential to God's plan and desire that those who embrace the saving work of his Son and receive his Spirit yield to the impulse of that Spirit to make them visibly one.'

(Ranaghans 1971:145) Then after emphasising John 17, he adds:

'those who follow his Son and receive his Spirit enter into a life of union and love with God and one another so that the Gospel may be believed and men may believe in Jesus and enter into the salvation and experience in the Christian community. *Christianity is essentially communal, and yielding to God must mean yielding to a community form of life.* (emphasis Martin's)

Martin here evidences the result of obedience to the call of the Spirit: too practical and visible community, and also the need for that community to be visibly one in order to facilitate credibility in the Gospel. He goes on to say in the same essay that: 'For the Spirit to fully express himself in bringing out the life of Jesus, we sense a need to have a real community where there is a closeness, intimacy, unity and commitment.' (:153). It is interesting that Martin sees the community renewal as being primarily for the Catholic Church in its early phase: 'While we know that what the Lord is doing has tremendous implications for the unity of Christians we are cautious about becoming just another 'interdenominational' charismatic group. We feel that the Lord is leading us to grow as a community which is open to all, but Catholic at its core, and that he desires to use us primarily at the moment as a witness within the Catholic Church.'(:161)

Emmanuel Sullivan devotes a chapter in his book 'Baptised into Hope' (1980:204) to the Community Movement.

We are now obliged to serve a new common goal. We have a new vocation to build up the Church in a new way... the only spirituality able to meet the demands of unity and diversity is a spirituality of charisms or spiritual gifts. I speak as someone who has been directly involved in a basic Christian community experiment.

Sullivan sees in the spirituality of the neo-Pentecostal movement an ability to build up the church in a new community way, where individuals are needed to function in mesh with their immediate neighbours. It is not a matter of a religious marching in step, where the appearance is of a smoothly functioning unity, if not uniformity. Rather it is now a matter of the Spirit being allowed to take the individual 'giftings' and bring them into a symphony with each other. This unity is now not so much uniformity of identical behaviour, but of collective functionality. The ecumenical implications are strong.

In his solo essay in *'As the Spirit Leads Us'* (1971:114), Kevin Ranaghan speaks movingly of how he first encountered a non-Catholic embrace after he had spoken at a Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship in Los Angeles in July 1968. A man, who had had a background in Judaism and conversion to Christianity in a Pentecostal church, heard Ranaghan's talk and made a public admission that until that evening he had always believed that no Catholic could be his brother in Christ, but that he had now recognised in Ranaghan 'the life of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit' (:114). This incident, remarks Ranaghan, is simply one example of hundreds of encounters in the previous four years in which Catholics had been brought into contact with Protestants under the charismatic umbrella. He then adds two important pointers concerning the purpose of the movement, which he notes from the first few years:

'...this outpouring of the Holy Spirit in these days has occurred to Catholics within the Catholic Church. The charismatic renewal *has not separated* (emphasis mine) or excluded Catholics from the Church. Rather it has renewed their love of the Church and has built up a lively faith within the Catholic community. While this 'movement' is then authentically Catholic, it has brought about a new dimension in ecumenical relations. For centuries, walls of fear and distrust have been built between Christians of different denominations. To heal the scandal, the Churches in the last fifty years have entered ecumenical dialogue, which at times has had wonderful results and at others has met with failure and frustration. Today, by the work of the Spirit among us, some of those old bricks have been knocked loose...We now see Catholics, evangelicals and fundamentalists sitting down together around the Word in a common experience of salvation to praise our Father with one voice in unity and love' (:116)

Ranaghan has used the term 'fundamentalists' and it is significant that he later on says: 'The people with whom we were meeting were mostly from a fundamentalist background. They spoke with that scriptural and theological fundamentalism that was very foreign to us. Furthermore, the way they spoke and prayed, the types of hymns they sang – all of this was so different that at first it was very disturbing.' (:117).

Two things seem illustrated here. Firstly: the Spirit seemed to be producing an effect inwards, into the denomination, renewing Catholics and affirming their place as a church and beginning to affirm some of the things in their tradition.

Secondly, the experience of worshipping across denominational barriers enabled the process of recognition. Christians can begin to see the things they have in common from opposite sides of the fence. The experience of worshipping in proximity, highlighted differences of culture and theology; especially the perceived phenomenon of 'fundamentalism'. There is no simple definition of 'fundamentalism', though usually it is indicative of a more literal approach to the inspiration and interpretation of scripture. But each approaches their interpretation from different assumptions. Here lies great hope and significance for ecumenism. If Catholic and Pentecostal can discover common ground here, the scene is prepared for wholesale demolition and reconstruction of some of the issues that have hitherto blocked progress towards Christian unity. (See Lance chapter 6). A scholar such as Francis Martin, with his 'hermeneutic of the Spirit', can have huge significance here, if his insights can be fully engaged in the ecumenical processes.

But from the far end of the Protestant spectrum, there is evidence of concern that the whole charismatic movement among Roman Catholics is highly deceptive. Usually, these (non-charismatic) Protestants, because of their inherent suspicion of Rome, automatically question the whole charismatic phenomenon. In an undated pamphlet, *The Charismatic Movement and Rome*, Stanley Wellington claimed that if this movement is genuinely of God, then it ought to lead to a 'definite dissatisfaction with the unbiblical Romish traditions'. Wellington cites O'Connor, (see above) as evidence for the deepest suspicions of CCR, because O'Connor declares that Holy Spirit renewal has strengthened the traditional devotions of the (Roman) church, increased the use of the sacrament of Penance, has given a higher profile to the person of Mary, and devotion to the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. This shred of evidence indicates that there is still a large distance between extreme Protestants and 'renewed

Catholics'. On this basis, visible Christian unity is still a long way off. Nevertheless, the first decade of CCR, demonstrated that, whilst the first wave of renewal was impacting within the denomination, the spiritual and theological reflections from the catholic theologians and authors indicated serious ecumenical consequences.

### **3.2 The Contemporary Picture**

Concerning contemporary CCR, Hollenweger notes the contrast between the early days and the later development as important for the ecumenical question. He says:

'In 1978 Kilian McDonnell wrote: "The Charismatic Renewal is the single most potent force on the ecumenical scene today. And it is here to stay. Both it and its ecumenical significance are permanent elements in the life of the Roman Catholic Church". I wonder whether he would write that today? (1997). Certainly in the seventies it was true. At that time he and many others (including myself) hoped that the charismatic renewal would become an ecumenical grassroots movement. Perhaps that potential still exists.' (1997:362)

As my first hand experience of contemporary CCR (circa 2000) was insignificant, it seemed essential to carry out some fieldwork as a pilot investigation. The immediate purpose was to map and assess the extent of CCR, to interview charismatic Catholics, to identify the best means of gathering further data, and to seek an answer to whether CCR has lost its ecumenical promise? But although only a pilot-project, the initial data collected, seemed confirmatory of Hollenweger's assertion. This section summarises and reflects upon what was discovered through various means of interviews, questionnaire, visits, and attendance at services.

#### **3.2.1 Pilot fieldwork interviews**

I started by asking the RC priests and lay-people I knew, what they, in their turn, knew of charismatic renewal within the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham; and the names of any personnel known to be identified with it. After a handful of such enquiries some names in common started to emerge, pointing immediately to the fact

that there was still an awareness of charismatic renewal. I conducted the interviews from a prepared list of questions (see Appendix 4), but found it easier to lapse into allowing interviewees to share their stories and then only interrupting with the occasional prompt. The fuller reports are in Appendix 7a.

### **John Moran.**

Vicar General of Birmingham Archdiocese, Moran had become aware of charismatic renewal in the early 1970's through reading; and the support of the Vatican II Council for charismatic renewal made it 'ok for Catholics.' (Moran's words) Although he claimed his spiritual life seemed to be at low ebb and prayer groups put him off, he eventually drove 40 miles each week for some weeks to attend such a catholic renewal group. He was prayed over and saw this as a 'turning point' rather than as 'baptism in the Holy Spirit'. He felt that CCR had declined somewhat, since its earlier days and prayer groups were smaller, but that it had been an important movement in the church and had broken down barriers. It was important to keep the movement going. Now however, he felt he personally needed to exercise caution as he was a member of the archdiocesan hierarchy, not so much in owning (or conversely hiding) his charismatic involvement as in attempting to pass it on.

In 2002 I attended a gathering of County Ecumenical Officers in Leeds. Telephone calls beforehand revealed two charismatic catholic priests in Leeds Diocese, who agreed to be interviewed:

Peter Rosser came into contact with charismatic renewal in the late 1970's through 'Life in the Spirit' seminars. As an RC Hospital Chaplain in Leeds, he was drawn to a Francis MacNutt healing Conference (see *Healing* MacNutt 1974) and became quietly involved in praying for the sick and healing. Another RC priest became aware

that as a baby some Romany Gypsies had told his (Rosser's) fortune. The effect of this had had a negative effect spiritually and the prayer ministry had the effect of releasing him from this 'curse'. Rosser's faith then 'gently fanned into flame' and he discovered that, praise and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament had a power which it 'doesn't have when we pray in a circle'. He was eventually to form a healing prayer group for the hospital and it was joined by a Baptist couple, who felt a distinct ecumenical call 'not to belong to our own particular (Baptist) community', another sign that the Spirit might be doing some barrier breaking in novel ways.

His concluding thoughts about contemporary CCR was that it was 'going down' in Leeds Diocese and that he had found the last eleven years a struggle. There seemed to be 'nowhere to go to praise God. Are we to try and re-create the 70's? Where is the Lord leading us?' For Rosser the former experiences seemed to have faded but there was a sensible resistance to going down the road of charismatic nostalgia.

Tom Kenny is an RC Parish Priest with a lively church on the edge of Wakefield, South Yorkshire. He sensed a call to ministry as a young man; but in training there was little teaching on prayer and spirituality other than the Latin breviary. In his words he was 'well trained in ecclesial matters'. During a retreat Kenny said 'help' to the Lord. He later used the word 'conversion' in the conversation and said that for him resurrection meant experiencing the living Jesus. He equated this period with 'Baptism in the Spirit' and said that a different 'me' emerged. He had much to say about evangelisation and the effect that *Catholic Alpha* was having where it had been tried. (see below). However, the most valuable contribution to emerge from this pilot interview with Tom Kenny was his introduction to the existence of National Service Committee for CCR in England. He himself was a member and his introduction to its

magazine *Good News*, a bi-monthly glossy periodical serving CCR in Great Britain and Ireland, has provided much primary source material for this study.

What was clear in these first three interviews, was the absence of any sense that charismatic renewal didn't belong in the Roman Catholic Church; or that their own status as Catholic priests was under threat. If anything the reverse seemed true. Renewal, at least initially, appeared to have affirmed them in church and office. Nevertheless, my hunch was growing that the experiences described paralleled those that pentecostals and evangelicals describe, but from within different ecclesial and theological contexts.

In the February/March 1986 Edition of *Good News* Peter Dolan asks in the lead article: 'Where have they gone?' referring to the priests who used to come to charismatic conferences but who no longer appear to. He mentions former charismatic priests who no longer attend the prayer meetings, and most importantly do not therefore encourage their people. Fear is mentioned, persecution from brother priests, and little support from Bishops. (There was a hint of this in Rosser's interview). By comparison from my own observations and conversations, numbers have also dropped in recent years (1990's) at some Anglican Charismatic Renewal meetings in contrast to the enthusiastic days of thirty years ago. Here Dolan is raising this matter barely twenty years on from the official beginning of CCR in 1967. So is CCR in decline or is it developing into something else? In August 2004, I was able to interview two key people who shed some light on these questions:

Chris Scott, a lay Catholic in Birmingham Archdiocese, had an interesting journey into Renewal. (see Appendix 7). He expressed a real scepticism over the 'Toronto blessing' (circa 1994) which he felt 'over the top'. But he valued Hocken's wisdom in bringing the fruits of Toronto into an 'RC renewal approach'. Scott now describes



himself as 'gone off the boil', but his experience of renewal has primarily helped him to have a better understanding of what Christianity is.

He felt that the overall effect of CCR on the denomination over 35 years was positive for those who had embraced it. What was clear was the emergence of the laity and a breaking of the old priest – people mould of 'pay, pray, obey'. This was a significant new fact in the light of declining numbers of vocations and increasing numbers of immigrant priests. He saw renewal as the seeds of Vatican II growing. The Spirit of God is 'opening people up. There is a gradual change coming with the gifting of the Spirit of God to tell us how exciting God is and could be.' He saw CCR not so much declining as 'cementing.' It is now on more solid foundations. 'Renewal must not get carried away with itself'. This latter is an interesting comment, which could be interpreted in opposite senses. It can herald maturity but may also mean a loss of momentum and the institutionalising of renewal. Scott added a comment I have rarely heard: 'we must remember those just coming in'. Here he indicated the need to provide for a continuing CCR work, not just a wave passing through. He saw ecumenism as being about the greatest gift of love. If we seek visible unity we must define the church first. 'Who is Jesus? Who is the Spirit? We are back to Alpha.' Scott's mature enthusiasm could serve as a role model for lay Catholics. There may exist many like him, not only in the Catholic church, but spread throughout the churches: still 'charismatic' and holding onto many of their initial convictions, but awaiting new directions.

(Date of visit: August 2004) David Keniry runs a diocesan centre for evangelisation in Coventry. Like Scott, he has clearly come to a mature, thought-through position on Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church. He mentioned Cardinal Suenens' seminal contribution at Vatican II in which he affirmed that the charismatic dimension

was one of the constitutive elements of the Catholic Church. Section 12 of *Lumen Gentium* was significant on charisms. Previously, he believed that the charisms were subsumed in the rite of anointing of the sick. (By comparison it is interesting to note that the healing/anointing gift for the sick in the Church of England 1662 Prayer Book Rite, is in the rite for anointing). This has often been taken as evidence that healing, as a charism, in the modern healing ministry is not a new gift to the church in modern times, but rather a thing always there but now rediscovered.

Like Chris Scott (above) he referred to the comments of the Pope in 1998, encouraging charismatics to remain within the Catholic fold. 'Sacrament and charism are co-essential for building the body'(Keniry). He saw Baptism in the Spirit as the key catalyst. He cited the work: *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Evidence from the First Eight Centuries* of McDonnell and Montague (1991) as important. His overall view was that CR had been and still is important; but that some people still have the view that it is peripheral, especially in Europe. It was important that Baptism in the Spirit led to personal spiritual growth and maturity rather than 'fundamentalism' (which he did not define). As for ecumenism: Keniry saw it as experiencing the Lordship of Christ together, adding that 'we can only do in our generation what we are called to do, '...obeying the Spirit in our time.'

In summary, one could say that the first 'generational wave' has passed through. The self-conscious distinction of the first generation of charismatics has given way to absorption of their energies into the mainstream of the denomination. This has inevitably meant a backing down from the more ecumenical charismatic gatherings. Nevertheless, the CCR has managed to retain a momentum with an unflagging emphasis on the grace of Spirit-Baptism.

### **3.2.2 Two Catholic Charismatic Renewal Masses (see Appendix 7b)**

Large scale charismatic gatherings set different models in the mind as norms. With memories of the seminal Fountain Trust meetings of the 1970s it would be intriguing to see if, and how, things had changed in thirty years. The London Day of Renewal on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2002 was an inspiring act of worship, but the visible and inspirational ecumenicity of the Fountain Trust was missing. However, there was little in this opening musical session to indicate that this was a Roman Catholic meeting. The Mass began at 1100 with 300 people present, the priests were robed; and the mass came over in a similar in style to that of an Anglican Renewal Eucharist. For the vast majority of the participants, charismatic renewal in a Mass setting seemed a normal ‘seamless robe’ experience for them. There was reverence and adoration at the time of the sacramental distribution, and the participants could move effortlessly from genuflection to raising hands in worship with clapping. There seemed to be nothing here of the dichotomy between doing ‘renewal things’ and tacking them on uneasily to a bit of traditional religion. But the absence of other denominations was only apparent. During the lunch hour I was introduced to other ‘regular Anglicans’. I was then taken into a backroom where I witnessed the preparation for the afternoon healing/ministry session. The leader was a younger catholic, Damien Stayne, leader of the Cor Lumen Christi Community, preparing a group of around twenty in how to pray and minister to the sick. The influence of John Wimber on the style and theology seemed almost tangible. Stayne talked of waiting and listening, tongues and words of knowledge (which he expected to get and did) and gave great attention to practical detail. When the afternoon session started, there were no histrionics in style and it was nearly an hour before Stayne reached the time of prayer ministry. This commenced with a Wimber style of invocation of the Spirit ‘to come’ There was no

shortage of candidates for prayer and no 'Toronto style' falling on the carpet that I could see, but occasionally came ripples of laughter and rejoicing. It was all so reminiscent of some of the healing meetings I had attended in the 1990s, but the atmosphere of authenticity and encouragement was not in doubt.

Attendance at this London Day of Renewal confirmed that CCR is still 'a going concern.' However, in the address by Damien Stayne, he spent some time explicating a concern in CCR circles, that numbers involved in renewal were plateauing or falling; and that the CCR was not making the impact on the wider catholic church that had been hoped.

Three years later I attended the Westminster Cathedral Charismatic Mass on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2005. Coming shortly after the Newman Consultation, I attended the above event in the expectation that it would provide an up to date 'shop-window' for the current state of health of CCR. To have the senior Catholic cleric of England preside, Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor, was a powerful symbol of acceptance of the charismatic movement within the denomination. It also modeled the unity of charism and institution, for all to draw from in their local acts of worship. On this Westminster occasion the worship songs were drawn from a range of denominational backgrounds. Anyone involved in renewal during the last twenty years would have recognised at least some of them. The congregation was around two thousand. The vast majority seemed to be Catholic, but a survey of attendees' denominations would have been interesting. The Cardinal began with a prayer for renewal of baptismal vows and walked the length of the aisle sprinkling dedicated water over the worshippers. His address centred upon the individual's call in baptism; 'where we begin our journey in Christ' and he referred to the journey's destination in heaven, citing the example of Pope John Paul II who was now 'fulfilled.' The Holy Spirit was

our leader and guide on the journey; and on that journey, joy and sorrow intermingle. It seemed well received, though had some other denominations' charismatics been present, they might have expected something more focused on charisms. What was obvious was that there was a care and acceptance of charismatics in the Catholic church by the Cardinal, who certainly remained 'himself' throughout the service.

The intercessions gave a strong clue that this was no ordinary Mass. After each bidding, there followed a corporate praying and some singing in tongues for about thirty seconds. This congregational activity was extremely moving and one had an unmistakable sense that these were the prayers of the people ascending. What was particularly moving was the object of the intercessions: *a new Pentecost, an increase in charisms, and a new evangelisation throughout this land.* (emphasis mine). The sense of sincerity and expectation in these intercessions was almost palpable. The whole service seemed to carry a sense that it was the most natural thing for Catholics to be charismatics. On exiting the Cathedral, one was handed a leaflet inviting to an International Catholic Charismatic gathering in Rome in June of 2006, plus a Pentecost vigil with Pope Benedict. So for this 'top-down' church, Charismatic Renewal is for this moment in history, an accepted phenomenon.

### **3.2.3 CCR Headquarters and *Good News***

The CCR headquarters in Chelsea is the heart of the English CCR network. (visit date 29<sup>th</sup> April 2002) and contains the *Good News* Library.

Christina Cooper, the editor of 'Good News' is a key person in the CCR network. She said that the ethnic diversity within the English CCR was growing in importance, especially in London. I noticed at the Charismatic Mass I attended in 2002 (above), that at least a third of the congregation were of non-white ethnic origin. Cooper mentioned the work of the Indian Catholic Retreat Centre at Kerala. Priests were

now being brought to England to minister to Indians. She believes that the English by temperament are not so spiritual, more pragmatic and difficult to evangelise. There was a growing role for the laity in evangelisation. There are now Catholics evangelised in London and ready to 'go out'. She saw a difference in emphasis between CCR and what she described as 'Evangelical' Renewal. The latter seek vibrancy, whereas Catholics work for the long term. 'CCR makes you more ecumenical and more catholic'. Cooper sees the diversity of the development of charismatic renewal in its lack of a clearly identifiable human founder.

'Like the Church itself those in Charismatic Renewal span both left and right wing politically, and can be theologically either liberal or conservative. There are those who are also very Marian or traditional in their spirituality and others who are more influenced by an evangelical worldview. For each their personal situation and circumstances has had an effect on how the initial grace has been lived out and expressed' (Cooper 2001:17)

For any particular individual encountering charismatic renewal, their starting worldview may well be a key shaper in their theological approach. This is further discussed below, when considering aspects of the Restorationist leaders' denominational origins. Cooper felt that Peter Hocken was 'further over' ecumenically compared to the centre of gravity of CCR. But Hocken may well have a unique calling in the area of renewal and ecumenism. (see Stephen Abbott below on 'apostles of unity'). Hocken himself says, 'In the 1990's, it is impossible to be so optimistic as in the early 1970's. Some countries in which charismatic renewal began with a strongly ecumenical flavour have seen regression into more tightly-knit Church groupings. The excitement of the Spirit bridging centuries-old barriers has given way to sentiments favouring retrenchment.'(1994:72). He may well be right. The February/March 1986 issue of *Good News* shows at least eight examples of ecumenical linkages. There is mention of Anglican-Catholic linkage in Gibraltar, the FGBMFI, Taize community in France, and House of the Open Door Community.

Significantly there is discussion of CCR developing fuller contacts with Anglican Renewal Ministries (ARM) and the Group for Evangelism and Renewal in the United Reformed Church (GEAR). What became of the proposal is not clear. Both ARM and GEAR may have diminished in profile since 1986, which is a pity, since strong praxis co-ordination and dialogue between the denominational renewal agencies, would seem to be essential if the early ecumenical promise was to be realised. Only such a forum would be likely to take forward the hopeful ecumenical legacy left by the Fountain Trust when it closed in 1980. (see Appendix 7c). Twenty years later the overt ecumenical evidence has changed. There is still renewal but it has now flavoured and retrenched its own denominations. Maybe CCR is leading the way. Without doubt CCR is still a 'going concern'.

For example, in the March/April 2002 issue of *Good News* (the issue that Tom Kenny handed to me), there is listed the names of the National Service Committee, including a bishop, three priests, a sister, five women, the others presumably laymen with Charles Whitehead as Chair. There were also listed contacts in each Catholic Diocese, with the particular aim of dispensing news of local prayer groups and other meetings. There were also contacts for Catholic Evangelisation Services and Catholic Alpha Office; addresses for books and tapes and of course many web-site addresses.

Most importantly the last three pages were covered with notification of Renewal Days, Alpha Courses, Discipleship Training, Life in the Spirit Seminars, Holidays, Pilgrimages, Evenings of Renewal, Youth Contacts, Cursillo, Maranatha, Retreats, Catholic Bible School, and Spring Harvest (the latter had 'ecumenical' in brackets after it). However, although Hocken's sentiments are probably accurate, *Good News* gives sufficient evidence that there is still an ecumenical dimension in CCR, but that

it is more difficult to locate. The most visible ecumenical aspect of modern Renewal is probably the *Alpha Course*. (see below)

### **3.2.4 The Pivot of Spirit Baptism in *Good News***

Just as Spirit Baptism was the departure point of Pentecostal theology from Azuza Street onwards, so it would seem from a general reading through of *Good News* that it remains the pivot of Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and particularly in the nomenclature. The term 'Baptism of (or in) the Holy Spirit' is retained throughout as representing a recognisable experience. But to Catholics (both Roman and Anglican) water baptism still functions sacramentally. The act of baptising conferred the Spirit. So the issue for a Catholic coming into a 'Pentecostal' experience was how could the acknowledgement of this new spiritual experience be made to square with sacramental water baptism, especially in infancy?

Derek Lance was chairman of the CCR diocesan service team in the Catholic Diocese of Northampton, and director for lay spirituality in the Diocese. He attempts an answer to the above question as follows:

They will see that what is called Baptism in the Holy Spirit does not negate, invalidate or repeat Sacramental Baptism, but that it can be seen as a renewal 'making our initiation as children (i.e. Sacramental Baptism) concrete and explicit on a mature level. They will find theological confirmation for their charismatic experience in Scripture as interpreted by the Catholic Church as well as in the teachings of the Vatican II Council and in the traditional Catholic theologians such as St. Thomas Aquinas and in the words of recent Popes. They will be able to see that the Catholic Church, constituted by the sending of the Holy Spirit, is of its very nature Charismatic and that Charisms (gifts of the Spirit) are given in, for instance, the sacraments of initiation and ordination. So there really is no problem in practice or theory in being both Charismatic *and* Catholic (emphasis Lance). (Lance 1989)

Lance illustrates the main dilemma, as he sees it, for a Catholic Charismatic. On the one hand, there is a developed and largely settled theology represented by Catholic orthodoxy, which has stood the test of time and been confirmed by Aquinas and Vatican Council. On the other is a genuine, authentic and accepted experience called



(the) Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is also accepted by Catholics but needs to be divested of any cultural and theological baggage in order to fit neatly into the theological system of the Catholic ages. Lance actually sees Charismatic Renewal fitting into the church neatly because it always was catholic:

Charismatic Renewal is really Catholic. Catholic Charismatic Renewal is not something alien which was imported into the Catholic Church. It is a renewal by the Holy Spirit of the age-old Catholic Church which of its nature and from the beginning was charismatic, Spirit filled. Although more recent charismatic renewal in this century began earlier in other Churches such as the Pentecostals and the Episcopalians, Catholic Charismatic Renewal is not in fact derived from these. It was a spontaneous outpouring, springing from and within the Catholic tradition. The Holy Spirit seems in this century to be moving powerfully regardless of denominational boundaries. (Lance 1989)

One perhaps sees here the wisdom of God in granting the Catholics their own ‘visitation’ in the matter of charismatic origins from within in 1967. But Lance surely makes the crucial point in that from the beginning the church was charismatic. The Spirit was guiding and forming the infant community. Whether we can draw a straight line from that assertion to the developed contemporary Catholic Church is another matter. And yet the kind of ‘ecumenical pressure’ that I believe the Spirit imparts is felt from both sides of the fence. It is undoubtedly true that the experience of Spirit-Baptism for many evangelicals in the early years of charismatic renewal (1960’s say) opened them up to meet, hear and start to become exposed to catholic culture and teaching. Most, if not all of the early Fountain Trust meetings and Conferences included input from Catholic priests on the platform. In the early days the simple sharing of worship, the practice of the charismata, and especially healing, kept several points of obvious linkage and harmony of *koinonia*. The deeper historical and theological divides of Catholics and Protestants were only just being approached, by people like Michael Harper and the early CCR theologians. But by the time Lance wrote his article, twenty years had gone by and the deeper theological issues were starting to be faced. Or were they? What has to happen for charismatic

renewal to fulfil its ecumenical calling is to allow the Spirit to challenge all of our traditions with the kind of questions suggested above. This cannot be hurried or be done simplistically. It needs agreement on methodology and much discernment and patience. Failure to see this, will result in premature judgements across whole areas of theology and may well block the Spirit from opening up fresh insights.

There is an tendency in Lance to assume that catholic theology *en bloc* remains inviolate rather than hint at the risks of exposure that need to be taken if ecumenical goals are to be really achieved.

### **3.3 Catholics and the Alpha Course**

The most visible ecumenical aspect of modern Charismatic Renewal is probably the *Alpha Course*; and significantly the Roman Catholics have embraced it. By any reckoning, the growth of the Alpha Course has been truly remarkable. There has been a quality of penetration with it, which has been far beyond what one might expect from what is, in effect, another course in Christian fundamentals.

It began life in the Anglican Church of Holy Trinity Brompton in West London as a straightforward Christian initiation course and is little more than fifteen years old in its present form. It had its roots in an Oxford Anglican evangelical church and it was taken to HTB when one of the clergy moved from Oxford to London. The course was developed with further sessions from its original three, and became a basic teaching and evangelistic tool within the normal ministry of the London parish. It is probably correct to describe it as an ‘alternative confirmation course for evangelicals’. Confirmation preparation and courses are to be found as a normal part of Anglican church life, but in the more evangelical parishes the emphasis is less sacramental and angled more towards encouraging the participant to a first time commitment to Christ. The reason for the lengthier course was the apparent paucity of background

knowledge of the Christian faith in the average participant of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thus far there is nothing remarkable, but two factors in the life of HTB seem to have served to turn the Alpha Course into a special vehicle:

Firstly: HTB was one of a cluster of Anglican churches which came into charismatic renewal in the late 1960's and its worship style and the size of its congregation reflected the effect of those developing years. A significant input to the church came from a previous vicar, John Collins, who had been previously Vicar of St. Mark's Gillingham, Kent, one of the first Anglican churches to be touched by charismatic renewal. Consequently by the late 1970s HTB had developed a strong charismatic culture.

Secondly: Under a new vicar, Sandy Millar, the church significantly hosted the controversial 'signs and wonders' ministry of John Wimber on one of his visits to England in the mid-1980s. The significance of Wimber, who founded the Vineyard churches in California, lay in his doctrine that the Holy Spirit should be evidenced in visible signs whenever He is invoked. Wimber's practice of 'calling down the Spirit' appeared new and controversial both to denominational charismatics and Pentecostals alike. Significantly, Wimber's ministry had a significant effect upon the ministry of HTB, and especially Sandy Millar and Nicky Gumbel. The latter was to become the video presenter of the Alpha course. For a while HTB became synonymous with 'Wimberism' within the Church of England. In time, Wimber faded from view and the 'signs and wonders' associated with him moved from centre stage. Meanwhile something almost unnoticed had happened to the Alpha course. In the process of its development, the topic of the Holy Spirit was given three sessions at a 'Holy Spirit away weekend'. The course participants spend forty-eight hours away on retreat, during which time they are prayed for: to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This weekend

comes in the middle of the course, sandwiched between a range of routine topics such as: 'Why did Jesus die?' 'How can I be sure of my faith?' the Bible, Prayer, Evil, the Church etc. An analysis of the course materials reveals something that is simple without being simplistic. A closer inspection shows an Anglican Evangelical 'orthodoxy' and a style of presentation that would be recognised by most Anglican clergy of that school over the last 50 years. Michael Saward, of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, probably gave an accurate diagnosis when he said that the Alpha Course was 'the evangelicalism of the 1950's mixed with the Toronto blessing of the 1990s' (Church Times correspondence 2001).

(Wimber's visit to HTB coincided with the revival happenings at the Airport Vineyard Church in Toronto, Canada, which attracted thousands from around the world to see the 'Toronto Blessing' for themselves.).

In this form, the Alpha course has been taken up by over seven thousand churches in the United Kingdom of several denominations, and in over a hundred different countries (*Alpha News*). Wherever it has been tried, Alpha seems to have born fruit in terms of bringing people to faith. This is where the genius of the course lies. It has made a 'seamless robe' out of a routine evangelical initiation course and welded in the charismatic emphasis upon Spirit-Baptism. Remarkably it achieves the latter without using the phrase, 'baptism in the spirit'. The overall result is that *Alpha* represents a globally available ecumenical course in basic Christianity with the charismatic dimension included in the package. But most significantly, it is a course that has been embraced by Roman Catholics:

The July-October 2003 edition of *Alpha News* ran its main headline: 'Cardinal's Welcome for Alpha' referring to Cardinal Schonborn of Vienna (who was responsible for drafting the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*) hosting the first International

Congress for a New Evangelisation. During the congress he listened to Nicky Gumbel (whom he had personally invited) doing an Alpha presentation to the 350 delegates, many of whom were young people. The lead article also refers to another significant event for Catholics and Alpha, held just prior to the Vienna conference. This was a similar conference held in Brentwood Catholic Cathedral, England. The Catholic Bishop McMahon similarly hosted this conference. He was photographed with ecumenical significance seated next to the local Anglican Bishop of Chelmsford. Bishop McMahon is quoted in the newspaper article as saying:

‘I welcome Alpha for two reasons: the first is that from all I have seen it is the most marvellous tool for evangelisation...  
‘My second reason is that – again from what I have heard and seen – Alpha serves to bring faith alive and to me that is the most important thing in the world because if a person’s faith and belief in Jesus becomes ‘real’ as opposed to ‘noticeable’ then you see the whole of life differently’

In the same *Alpha News*, there is a feature article about how Alpha has affected the life of the Roman Catholic parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Corpus Christi, Texas. Catholic churches in England tend to have quite large numbers of people attending compared with their Anglican and Free Church neighbours. One reason that might be advanced to explain this are that Catholic churches tend to be mass centred, therefore priest centred. The Catholic laity are geographically eclectic and where Catholic priests are thinly spread, they are prepared to travel some distance to get to mass. Hence numbers tend to be higher. But as hinted earlier, mass attendance might be seen as a duty, which once complete leaves little further sense of binding into community at the local level. The Texas church experience has strong hints of this. The first Alpha course transformed moderately active Catholics into very active members. After the flush of initial success, the parish priest, Michael Heras said:

‘You’re still treating this like a programme, like an activity. It is not; it is quintessential to the church: outreach, conversion, evangelisation, formation, education. It’s everything....Since Alpha started we’ve seen joy in the church and

more accountability. I've seen excitement and 'two feet in' total commitment that I didn't see before.

Tim Kroeger, Director of Evangelisation and Formation at the same Texas RC Church says in the same newspaper report:

'Our most recent Alpha was still packed out—mainly because of word of mouth, because of the energy of the people behind it who wanted their friends and family to go. You don't normally see people at a Catholic parish during the week. It is unheard of. The Bishop of Corpus Christi is on fire about it. He's been here during Alpha with his mouth wide open saying, 'What are all these people doing here on Wednesday nights?'

Catholics use the term 'evangelisation' in parallel with the usage of the term 'evangelism' by Anglicans and Protestants. In the August/November 2004 *Alpha News*, the RC Archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh wrote of his desire to see the 're-Christianisation' of Scotland in a letter to delegates attending the Glasgow Alpha conference in June 2004. But Catholics tend to see 'evangelisation' more in terms of bringing to faith and grounding (or formation) than focusing upon a decision point or period in time for initial faith response. This overlapping but difference in usage between the two terms became clear in the 1990s 'Decade of Evangelism' in the 1990's. 'The Decade' was an ecumenical call largely motivated by the approaching Millennium of the Year 2000.

For Roman Catholics in England there has been a muted anxiety that they needed to arrest decline. But this anxiety is also shared by most of the traditional churches. There was also the Church of England anxiety, that the Decade of Evangelism ought not to be simply an exercise by the Evangelicals pulling the rest along. There must be a considered theology behind the whole exercise. Thus the decade was primarily focused upon extending the gospel message and growing churches, but there was also ecumenical fruit from the evangelistic exercise. It highlighted once again the truth that the gospel of reconciliation can only be preached effectively out of reconciling and reconciled churches. Supremely this fact was demonstrated in the Edinburgh

Missionary Conference of 1910, when the mission focus of that conference gave birth to the modern ecumenical movement.

But the same argument can be used in reverse: I sensed a growing tendency at CTE Conferences in the late 1990s to state that ecumenism ought only to arise out of joint mission and evangelism, rather than through the painstaking process of theological dialogue and ‘ecclesiastical joinery’. There is an important truth here but when pressed too far it becomes an argument for ‘laissez-faire’. This seems to be why Alpha is so significant in that it brings together evangelisation (which everyone is really looking for) and also carries an ecumenical consequence along with it.

The April-July 2004 issue of *Alpha News* contains an interesting account from Jorge Santos, a Roman Catholic priest in Febres, Portugal. Whilst studying for a Master’s degree in Paris in 2000, he attended an Alpha course at Holy Trinity Brompton. His Master’s subject was actually on ‘conversion’, hence the appeal of the HTB visit. The Alpha course was subsequently tried out in his Portuguese parish with some success. Around 600 went through the course in four years, and there has been a shift from mainly elderly ladies in the congregation to couples and young people. Significantly Santos notes that it is the Alpha weekend which is the significant part: ‘For us the Alpha weekend is fundamental – it’s the key. The guests change completely after the weekend.’ (*Alpha News* April-July 2004:13)

The same newspaper also carries a report from three Lutheran church pastors from the area around Minneapolis, Minnesota. Once again a familiar story emerges. Some Lutheran ministers reluctantly attended an Alpha Conference, but once tried it had the same surprising effects upon individuals causing faith to come alive and witnessed considerable subsequent church growth. ‘During the first 18 months of doing Alpha, we ran five courses and I saw more lives changed, more personal transformation,

more marriages saved, than I had seen in all my previous 18 years of ministry' (Steve Gartland, Alpha News, April-July 2004). The same newspaper also mentions that a significant proportion: one fifth, of Paris Catholic churches are doing Alpha. 630 delegates attended a Paris Alpha Conference in January 2004, a mixture of Protestants and Catholics. A French Roman Catholic Priest, Michel Girard, features in the new Alpha introductory video and DVD. The ecumenical implications are obvious. But perhaps the significant seal of approval for Alpha as far as the Roman Catholics are concerned is the feature on the presentation of the Revd. Nicky Gumbel to the Pope. On his return Gumbel said:

It was a great honour to be presented to Pope John Paul II, who has done so much to promote evangelisation around the world. We have been enormously enriched by our interaction with Catholics in many countries. It is a great privilege to meet inspiring leaders from different parts of the church – Catholic, Baptist, Salvation Army, Pentecostal, Lutheran, Methodist, and so many more – and discover that what unites us is infinitely greater than what divides us. (Alpha News)

Allowing for the inevitable hype of HTB editorial policy, the various editions of Alpha News seem to suggest *that regardless of which denomination is being reported upon, the spiritual effects seem common to all and there is a commonality of language to describe it* (emphasis mine). This is the ecumenical clue, but will it be noticed? Research commissioned by Alpha News (2001) suggests that significant percentages of the population are aware of the Alpha Course: 16% is suggested for one survey in Canada and 15 % in England. These figures demonstrate the effectiveness of Alpha marketing and they would seem to outstrip the kind of awareness of the Decade of Evangelism (see above).

Given that Alpha may well be a surprising movement of God, perhaps a 'Baptism in the Spirit in disguise', which has brought to churches around the world a combined ecumenical-charismatic-evangelisation package as a seamless robe, what does the future hold for it? Could it be seen as an unrecognised answer to the years of prayer



for 'revival'? Perhaps it can be hoped that when the present movement attenuates, its leaders will at least notice it and not allow Alpha to lapse into a mechanical evangelistic methodology which was yesterday's success story, but has become another ecclesiastical redundancy. Perhaps as its name suggests Alpha is primarily about initiation and that it may eventually give way to a period of formation and maturation of individuals and churches. Of particular importance to the present thesis will be to see if the ecumenical fruit from Alpha will be noted and acted upon.

Meanwhile, there is no evidence that this stage is in sight. In the August/November, 2004 issues of *Alpha News*, the expansion continues in a report of Nicky Gumbel's address to a major European Conference in Stuttgart entitled *Together for Europe*. 10,000 attended and up to 100,000 were linked in at other European cities. Mentioned were Queen Fabiola of Belgium, the Grand Duke of Luxembourg, and (significantly) Cardinal Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Still allowing for an element of editorial triumphalism, it is difficult not to escape the extent of the impact that Alpha has had across the churches. (Kasper is still prominent in the July-November 2007 *Alpha News* where Nicky Gumbel addressed the same conference. The Prime Minister of Italy was present on this latter occasion).

The Catholic-Alpha links continue to receive good reports in the August-November 2005 edition of *Alpha News*. Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa is photographed on the front page as he spoke at the opening of an Alpha international week in London, but most significantly is the photographed presence of Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk and Slusk, Patriarchal Exarch of all Belarus, representing the Russian Orthodox Church. The headline reads: 'Praise from Catholic and Orthodox Dignitaries'. In that same edition of *Alpha News*, the Bishop of London, in the forward to Sandy Millar's book

of sermons *All I want is You* (2005) described Alpha, as ‘...a most significant international missionary agency’.

Yet despite Alpha’s high profile, it was the Roman Catholic Charismatics who first pioneered a charismatic course with their ‘Life in the Spirit’ seminars. The seminars emanated from the Word of God Community, Ann Arbor, Michigan with a first edition in 1971. David Payne, who was running the ‘Alpha for Catholics’ office said: ‘In some ways Alpha is not unlike the very successful Life in the Spirit seminars’(1996:1). O’Neill (1978) in his thesis some years before, was somewhat critical of the seminars. He sees them as ‘a genuine attempt to package CR for mass consumption’ (:455) and of their style: ‘a glaring example of biblical literalism and theological naivety’(:56). One might guess that he would have commented similarly upon Alpha. One cannot avoid noticing the obvious comparison between the Ann Arbor Community in the early days of CCR and Holy Trinity Brompton in the 1990s. O’Neill remarks: ‘since the services of Charismatic renewal (he cites literature, magazine, tapes, conferences) are centralised in a few communities, the renewal as a whole tends to ape the Word of God Community’(:30). A feature of renewal in general has been that significant ‘power centres’, such as Ann Arbor, Holy Trinity Brompton, the Bradford Group in Restorationism, (see chapter 5) and events such as Spring Harvest do exert a seminal influence across the whole hinterland of their clientele. In its early days Anglican Renewal Ministries (ARM) adapted the Life in the Spirit seminars as ‘Saints Alive’. ‘Saints Alive’ sought to add the Spirit dimension to those who were already largely Christian. Thus there was an inevitable risk in giving a sense that the Spirit was a kind of luxury which might be added on. It must be remembered that the theological dilemma of baptism in the Spirit in relation to other aspects of initiation still shows through these courses, but Alpha seems the

best attempt yet to integrate it with some credibility. Alpha too has had its share of hostile criticism. The course is short on many things. It is lightweight on sacramental matters. (perhaps inevitably so, avoiding unnecessary controversy). But Alpha was only ever intended to be a vehicle of introduction to the Christian faith. The deeper theological aspects and more controversial questions could be dealt with in later church programmes. In recent years various 'competitive' courses have been tried as alternatives and supplements to Alpha: e.g. *Emmaus* which has had a measure of success and its material seems more substantial. In 2004 a *Beta* course was introduced which, judging from its marketing, seems to introduce some sound psychological material into its syllabus. There is a feeling that these newer courses have arisen in response to criticisms of Alpha.

So have Roman Catholics, by embracing Alpha, undergone an ecumenical leavening? It is probably too early to answer this question. When one stands back from the triumphalism of this remarkable movement, one is still left wondering if the denominations will duck the hard road of ecumenical dialogue. However, encouraging the stories are in terms of church growth, it still invites the question of who and how are the ecumenical issues to be taken forward.

### **3.4 The movement considers its future**

#### **3.4.1 Charles Whitehead outlines the future for CCR**

In September 2003, Charles Whitehead, chair of the English National Service Committee, delivered an important paper to 700 leaders of the CCR world-wide, at the Pope's summer residence, Castelgandolfo, Italy. The paper was a useful objective assessment of where contemporary CCR seemed to be. In the opening paragraph Whitehead stressed the importance of not losing sight of the original vision. It is easy

to 'distort or misinterpret what God is doing.' There is once again a balanced stress on the sovereignty of God in renewing people in the Holy Spirit, which is both a state and a process. Because of its diversity, the CCR is not a single world-wide unified movement with founders and membership lists. Relationships and networks are stressed rather than separate charismatic structures, indeed the structure is already there in the form of the Church itself and 'that's enough.' 'The desire' says Whitehead is basically simple: 'To help others to have their Christian lives renewed in the same way that ours have been renewed. Some organisation may be necessary to facilitate the working of the Spirit.' (Whitehead 2003)

He has some interesting things to say about leadership. It is a gift as well as a skill. Some are invited, some elected, some appointed. Notably: 'Some are self-appointed because they have the vision and commitment to start a new group or ministry.... But *the Renewal is always under the pastoral care of the local Bishop*' (emphasis Whitehead's). He gives an estimated figure of 120 million for those who have not only come into contact with CCR, but who would testify to a life-changing experience of the Holy Spirit as a result. This figure is unsubstantiated, but if true is quite staggering: twice the population of Britain.

Whitehead then reaffirms some of the more traditional gifts and ministries associated with renewal: expectant faith, healing, spiritual warfare, joy and celebration, a New Evangelisation, hope, prophecy, spiritual warfare and engagement with evil, and significantly: social issues, peace and justice. He warns of the dangers of compromise, by which he means failing to stress things which others may find uncomfortable e.g. Baptism in the Spirit, tongues, prophecy, healing, evangelisation. Indeed one has a distinct sense whilst reading the lecture, that if only more Protestant and Independent charismatics were to be aware of the things that CCR is saying, then

closer relationships should be inevitable. So, for example, the lecture contains very little that a Restorationist (say) could reasonably find difficult, except that it is coming from a Catholic source. In looking ahead, Whitehead mentions Institution and Charism, which is clearly now an axiom of CCR. But his ecumenical comments are significant:

Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II have both emphasised the importance of our contribution to ecumenism. Because we share the experience of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with Protestant, Pentecostal, and Non-denominational Christians, we have a special part to play in building strong ecumenical friendships. But to do this, we must first be sure of our Catholic identity. We are Catholic first and ecumenical second.

This latter point is being increasingly acknowledged within general ecumenical discussion. Individuals, groups and churches, need to own their identities first before engaging in dialogue with those who differ. There is a difference between a blind unexamined loyalty to one's tradition, and a serious owning of the convictions that lie within it and define it.

### **3.4.2 A Charismatic Bishop's response**

In response to the questionnaire among key people, Ambrose Griffiths, RC Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, sent an enthusiastic reply, judging from its length. His initial encounter with CCR was as an observer of a CCR Conference at Ampleforth Abbey in 1972. He was impressed with the sense of joy and faith at a charismatic Mass he 'drifted into'. He joined with other monks involved in renewal, but the majority of monks remained opposed. His description of the early days parallels that of renewal in other denominations. It was divisive. He cites the style of music, arm waving, tongues etc. and suggests that even Catholic charismatics tended to hint that they were the only genuine Christians. Interestingly he uses evangelical language to describe the Spirit Baptism:

Unless people's faith comes alive through Baptism with the Holy Spirit or, in other words, they have a profound conversion, they are likely to remain either marginal or merely dutiful members of the Church. (Questionnaire response - March 2004)

This equating of Spirit Baptism with 'conversion' is reflected in two other written responses. It seems that where charismatic renewal is encountered after many years of nominal church attachment, the new commitment engendered by renewal can be described as 'conversion'. However, where 'conversion' to Christian faith and worship had clearly happened years before encountering charismatic renewal, then the classic second blessing theological problems arise. (See Tom Smail below). In answer to my question about decline and growth of CCR, Griffith's reply was enlightening: if one looked at the number of active prayer groups, memberships and Charismatic conference attendees, one might deduce that CCR was declining in England. However, he saw a redirection of CCR's energy with a new emphasis upon serving the wider church. This has led to a new emphasis upon evangelisation and the adoption of the Alpha programme into the Catholic Church. This in turn has spurred them on to develop specifically Catholic teaching programmes for parish use (*circa* 1000 parishes in England) and the programme known as Catholic Faith Education (CAFÉ). The Celebrate Conferences are always a sell out and these have encouraged groups of young people to meet in various parts of the country.

Griffith's perception is that CCR has not declined but metamorphosed. Without becoming other than CCR, its flow and energies have diffused into the wider church and become less measurable in terms of mere adherents at charismatic events. This description is an indication of the potential of CCR to renew the denomination within, and it is arguable that perhaps at this stage of time it may be as important as ecumenically looking outward. However, both dimensions are important.

Griffiths agreed that 'the fullness of the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic church subsists in the Roman Catholic Church', but added:

'We are not saying that we are perfect, nor are we in any way denying that many elements of the Church are to be found in the other Christian churches, indeed just the reverse. All we are saying is that all the essential elements are to be found, however imperfectly carried out, in the Roman Catholic Church.'

In response to the ecumenical question Griffiths replied: 'I have many contacts with other Christian churches in the normal run of institutional church and in ecumenical gatherings of all sorts, but the charismatic renewal does not feature among them.'

He added that it had never occurred to him to see charismatic renewal as an ecumenical catalyst, though possibly he could say it of the Focolare Movement. But he sees the charismatic approach as extremely helpful for understanding the Gospel in its full reality and therefore very helpful for genuine unity. As part of the process he clearly advocates dialogue and especially a fresh honest look at the real development of the Christian church. 'Most of the other Christian churches lack an historical perspective and talk as though nothing happened between the first century and the sixteenth....'

The considered response of a Roman Catholic Diocesan Bishop, deeply committed to charismatic renewal, is a significant indicator to the current 'state of play' of CCR. One thing that emerges from the totality of my various encounters with Catholic Charismatics is the absence of any sense that CCR is calling that great Church to forsake its roots and 'hurry through' some quasi-latter day Reformation to re-align with the Protestants. There is indeed 'renewal', 'revival' and 're-affirmation' but not 'restoration' or 'reformation' in an institutional sense. Could it therefore be guessed that the Spirit is 'renewing without reforming' because the historic shape, which is the Catholic Church, is somehow already adequate for the divine purpose and does not need further adjustment. These thoughts are discussed below where Peter Hocken's

work is further analysed and the question of re-integration with the ancient historic churches of east and west is considered.

### **3.4.3 The Newman Consultation**

An informative casual conversation in April 2005 H Anderson, provided some interesting anecdotal evidence of the early days (1970s) of CCR in Southern Ireland. (See Appendix 7). ‘Great unity was experienced among the different denominations, and the prayer groups continued for quite some time in an atmosphere of love and freedom. People who were involved told me (Anderson) that *the presence of the Holy Spirit withdrew in most cases when the Roman Catholic hierarchy tried to control the meetings or bring them into a more traditional Catholic framework.*’ (Emphasis mine). The panic reaction from the hierarchy described here may well have been rooted in fear of loss of control. Perhaps the most important clue was the claimed withdrawal of the Spirit when the overt *ecumenical* activity ceased. There is also perhaps a significant Irish factor: in a still radically divided religious culture, the idea of Catholics and Protestants worshipping together in Prayer and Praise may have been a religious ‘bridge too far.’ Nevertheless, this small fragment may well be an indicator that CCR has had built within it a subliminal caution factor. So the Newman Conference of June 2005 held at Newman College, Birmingham, England to consider where CCR had reached in its pilgrimage, would obviously be of some significance. The Conference drew 250 together; including the national service committees from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, plus a number of invited guests and representatives from other denominations. These included John Noble (Independent House Church Leader) and Nicky Gumbel of the Alpha Course. Charles Whitehead had written in the July/August 2005 (No.178) edition of *Good News* an article ‘A New call to Unity’ ante-dating, and perhaps anticipating, the



Newman consultation. He noted in the article that CCR was a highly diverse collection of individuals, groups, communities and special ministries, often quite independent of one another with different callings. This had been the pattern since CCR began in 1967, and no attempt had been made to integrate CCR into a large structure. So CCR's bureaucratic role had been one of co-ordination, relations and networking. Whitehead noted that the main purpose of CCR was to help people receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. (Indeed this has been and strongly remains the central plank of CCR wherever one looks in the literature. Unlike some other denominations there seems to have been no fading on this identifier over the years). But Whitehead's call to unity in this article is concerned very much with internal unity within the movement. Reading between the lines it is possible to detect the same problem that can be seen in many places: that of co-ordinating leadership of diverse groups to move together on a shared vision. It is interesting to note that in one of Peter Brierley's recent surveys on factors affecting church growth (2005), he cites clear vision and strong leadership as the two most necessary. In a sense this last sentence summarises the entire ecumenical task on the broadest and narrowest fronts. Disunity and separation within churches is *ipso facto* internal before it becomes external. There is always the temptation for any pressure group to see itself not simply as a means to renewal of the whole church, but to begin to regard itself as the whole church. Whitehead's own words: 'if our unity is to grow we must build these new relationships and restore personal friendships. We need to get to know one another better, to share, pray, and relax together and then to find ways in which we can demonstrate our new unity. (:21) 'Restoring personal friendships' may not necessarily imply wholesale falling out between persons; but maybe the networking may have outgrown itself by size and various fragments may have drifted apart. Whitehead then

recalls readers to Ephesians 4v2 (the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace) John 17 v 21 and other scriptures. His goal is the better sharing of the Gospel and his final sentence in the article reads: ‘Then others will be able to say: See how much these charismatics love one another!’ This re-emphasis on ‘unity within’ chimes with the same emphasis made by Stephen Abbott (see chapter 6). Thus it was no surprise to note that a fresh call to unity was high on the list of results from the Newman Consultation. Kevin McDonald, Catholic Archbishop of Southwark, brought out in his address a number of refreshing emphases, which evidence how CCR has had from its beginning, the advantage of theologically reflective leadership close up to the praxis. The Roman Catholic Church in contrast to some other denominations starts with a high ecclesiology among its members, especially its laity. He underscores again something that Catholics have taken onboard as a charismatic credo: that charism and institution belong together. He quotes Pope John Paul II, in reference to the Second Vatican Council: ‘The institutional and charismatic elements are almost co-essential to the configuration of the church’. McDonald cites Pope John Paul II himself as embodying the two in his person by his office and his personal charisma. He also notes the significance of the link between Vatican II itself and the development of CCR, and encourages prayerful pondering and theological reflection on the interaction between the renewal and the wider life of the church. But the future of CCR was the main topic of the Newman Consultation. One question on the 1000 questionnaires, which were sent out (and a high proportion returned) was: ‘is the grace of renewal still there?’ McDonald expanded it: ‘Is it still explicitly acknowledged as such?’ ‘Have people who were once involved moved on to other things?’ ‘Are the charisms still being prayed for, still being affirmed, still being used?’ ‘is the specificity of the Charismatic Renewal now weakened or qualified?’

But Ecumenism was the first priority of note in McDonald's diagnosis, not just of the past, but of the future. He affirms that Charismatic Renewal gave birth from its beginning to a vibrant form of ecumenism based on mutual recognition of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but that in itself cannot be a substitute for work of the official ecumenical movement. He sees CCR as an important dimension of the institutional-charismatic dialectic; but that in recent years there has been a tendency *throughout Christianity* (emphasis mine) to pull back and stay within the bounds of one's own church. If renewal is to be ecumenically fruitful it needs not only to be domesticated in its own denomination to leaven its parent, but it must go beyond the boundaries to engage with the corresponding process coming towards it from other denominations. McDonald makes this point when referring to the importance of Scripture: 'because of the contact between the Catholic Renewal and evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity—the scriptures are of fundamental importance'. (2005).

Academic theology is important. CCR primarily talks the language of experience, which can seem subjective and lacking in intellectual rigour. He advocates that Catholics cannot duck the theological engagement with contemporary culture which their faith demands.

The other keynote speaker was somewhat predictably Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa whose address was a fresh biblical exposition of Pentecost and Baptism in the Spirit. It seems that the emerging theme of the priority of unity had a unique enactment at the Newman Conference, because the coming together of the Isles and reconciliation between England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, with their wounded historical relationships was seen as significant. Charles Whitehead quoted Cardinal Newman, who had said: 'the coming together of the Isles would bring great power'.

The July/August 2006 edition of *Good News* has on its cover a photograph showing a packed St. Peter's Square, Rome, for the Pentecost 2006 gathering of representatives of Catholic lay movements and new communities, which included CCR. It is harder to find the word 'ecumenical' in this edition of *Good News* compared to the issue of twenty years previously (see above), but on closer inspection its pages show a more imperceptible ecumenism. There is an element of the already achieved within it. The report from Ireland is centred upon the remarkable effect of 'Alpha'. There is a full report by Charles Whitehead on the Azusa Street Centennial held in April 2006 in Los Angeles. Significantly Whitehead was the only non-Pentecostal on the organising committee. There are important articles on healing (from AIDS), resolution of inner conflict, including disagreements within Catholic congregations. The more devotional and spiritual articles reflect a maturity and usefulness for a far broader scene than the immediate catholic clientele. (e.g. helpful approaches to homosexuality). The address of Pope Benedict at the St. Peter's gathering is pneumatologically centred: 'The Holy Spirit, giving life and freedom, gives also unity. They are gifts that are inseparable one from the other...'(*Good News* :15).

The Newman Conference (2005) indicated a sense of expectancy and the capacity to be still radically open to the Spirit, but it was from the celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CCR in May 2007, that some significant evidence surfaced. At the Westminster Cathedral service, Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan gave their assessment of four key components of CCR at the beginning: the centrality of Baptism in the Holy Spirit, the importance of charisms (especially healing), *the significance of the ecumenical dimension of the early meetings* (my emphasis), and the key role played by young people. (*Good News* 190:30). After lunch, Charles Whitehead introduced his 'ecumenical guests': Nicky Gumbel of the Alpha Course, John Noble, (who

attended the Newman Conference) and significantly Michael Harper, now an Orthodox priest. But it was Whitehead's remarks in his lecture which once more signalled the ecumenical hope. He challenged the CCR that it had walked away from ecumenism when it had become difficult. 'I feel the Holy Spirit is calling us back to the pain and joy of ecumenism. It is time to be one again, not just in conferences. It is time again to do what God is doing.' (*Good News* 190:31). These sentiments are further explicated, in a major article by Whitehead in the same magazine:

So for some of the early leaders, the priority became the need to demonstrate to the whole Church, hierarchy and people, that the CCR was fully Catholic. For this to happen, the ecumenical dimension needed to be played down. This was a decision taken from the best of motives, but was it a mistake? Did we fall short of God's best? (*Good News* 190: 25)

This is both a revelation and a confession, and is largely confirmed in this thesis. The priority has been to 'sell' renewal first of all into the denomination. That had to be an understandable priority. But having seen CCR affirmed by the Catholic hierarchy the time must now come when the ecumenical dimension is picked up again. Ranaghan again in the next edition of *Good News* (191:14) calls the call to ecumenism, 'a fundamental part of our "entrustment"'.

#### **3.4.4 Summary**

This chapter began with Michael Harper's ecumenical vision for Charismatic Renewal. It ends with him as an Orthodox priest at a Catholic conference, being matched by a parallel conviction from a Catholic layman. The visions may be powerful inspirations, but there still has to be the theological tools and ecclesiastical machinery connected into the task to enact ecumenical progress.

In this brief chapter, one has seen the CCR come early under analysis from the movement's own theologians. Whilst the central focus of debate was the squaring of spirit-baptismal interpretations with Catholic sacramental theology, and the weight of

opinion suggested a playing down of the phrase 'baptism in the spirit'; yet the phrase, and the experience it labels have remained the central defining factor of CCR. The CCR has remained as a continuously conscientious and visible current within English Catholicism and more widely throughout the period from 1967 onwards. Denominational recognition has certainly helped to protect and give the movement confidence. Perhaps, more than anything, the continued existence of clearly focused and well-led National Service Committees, both in the four British Countries and internationally, has ensured its success. Finally the last few years have seen the re-ownership of the call to unity. It suggests the speculative question: will CCR be the main model and thrust of Charismatic Renewal into the third millennium?

## CHAPTER 4

### THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND KOINONIA ECCLESIOLOGY

#### 4.1 Defining Koinonia

It appears that the concept of *koinonia* has taken root in ecumenical theology. The 1987 topic of the Vatican/Pentecostal Dialogue was: 'Koinonia, Church and Sacraments', and for 1988: 'Koinonia and Baptism'.

The term is used extensively in *The Gift of Authority* (1999): 'The Roman Catholic Church, especially since the Second Vatican Council, has been gradually developing synodal structures for sustaining *koinonia* more effectively.'(para 54). 'In the Anglican Communion there is a reaching towards universal structures, which promote *koinonia*. Even so, there are still issues to be faced by Anglicans and Roman Catholics on important aspects of the exercise of authority in the service of *koinonia*.' (para 55); and 'our two communions should make more visible the *koinonia* we already have...For the sake of *koinonia* and a united Christian witness to the world...At this new stage we have not only to 'do' together whatever we can, but also to 'be' together all that our existing *koinonia* allows.'(para 58)

Gros (2000) traces the modern usage of the *koinonia* term in ecclesiology back to the 1920s, but it was given more prominence in the discussions of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Gros uses the phrase 'the theology of communion' more than *koinonia*, and this may not be surprising in that for Roman Catholics, ecumenical reunion has the underlying nuance of 'bringing back into communion with Rome'. So *koinonia* has an element of challenge to Roman Catholics. 'Being in Communion' is something of a technical phrase, not limited to Roman Catholics. It is used extensively by Anglicans, and it has important practical ecclesiastical consequences

for acceptance of ministries. Gros notes that since 1985 *koinonia* has been an important theme in magisterial documents of the Catholic Church. He cites the Exhortation reporting the 1994 Synod on Religious Life, *Vita Consecrata*, where ‘communion’ is used in twenty-three out of one hundred and twelve paragraphs. In *Ecclesia in America* (2000) it occurs in twenty-six out of the seventy-six paragraphs (:169)

*Koinonia* as a concept has affinities with the term *culture*. Culture seems primarily a collective noun, taking up the totality of activity and thought of a particular group. (Hence in modern Greek: *Koinonia* means ‘society’ and *koinono* means ‘to commune’). Now that it has been taken up as an ecclesiological term of major ecumenical importance, it also permits of different nuances and needs further definition. Gros (: 170), still preferring ‘communion’, distinguishes three senses of *koinonia*: the communion among the persons of the triune God, the relationship of Christians to God in Christ, and to the ecclesial communion of Christians with one another in the Church of Christ. Put simply, there are at least three mutually overlapping circles of *koinonia*. It is interesting that St. Paul’s pre-Trinitarian phrase of status to define a Christian: ‘en christo’ refers primarily to the middle circle, whilst being deeply concerned about the third circle.

Looney (2000) in a major essay, compares the usage of *koinonia* in two dialogues: the Disciples of Christ-Roman Catholic International Dialogue, which brings together a credal and non-credal tradition; and the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order of 1993, the most extensive multi-lateral dialogue to date. (see below). His main question is: that given the centrality that *koinonia* ecclesiology is now given in ecumenical theology, how able is the concept to bear the weight put upon it? His



comparison of the two dialogues shows two distinct but overlapping interpretations in *koinonia*, which he sees as complimentary.

The Santiago text...presented a more comprehensive rendering of the means by which the Church is maintained in *koinonia* than the Disciples – Roman Catholic report, appeared to lag behind by its hesitancy to speak explicitly of an ecclesiology of communion as the foundational ecumenical ecclesiology...The Disciples- Roman Catholic dialogue, on the other hand, explicitly claimed to have reached agreement on the basic nature of the Church as *koinonia* without coming to complete agreement on all the means by which that *koinonia* is maintained in the life of the Church. Santiago's stance on this issue challenges the Disciples-Roman Catholic position in light of the intrinsic relationship between the nature of *koinonia* itself and the elements that comprise it in the life of the Church. The nature and elements of *koinonia* cannot be artificially separated (:164)

Looney suggests that the Disciples-Roman Catholic dialogue might have better spoken of 'real but imperfect' communion between their traditions (a phrase that occurs often in ecumenical documents); but he concludes that *koinonia* does have the capacity to serve as an ecclesiological paradigm.

In 1991 the World Council of Churches Seventh Assembly in Canberra, adopted a report summarising its work, which contains many significant ideas indicating where the modern Ecumenical Movement has reached. The title of the report was *The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling*. Compressed into those few words is an existential concept of Christian unity, both as a vocation and as a given. The title takes its cue from 2 Corinthians 13 v 13, where the Greek word *koinonia* is used to indicate 'fellowship'.

Canberra uses the word *koinonia* to locate the root of Christian unity in the area of shared experience. Unity is a corporate togetherness in Christ, before it is agreement in doctrinal statements. It is a given of the Holy Spirit and must be sought out, rather than something that can be created 'ex-nihilo' as a desirable bonus for the churches. Therefore, as something given and rooted in the Spirit, it must also be attainable. Hence the imperative expressed in the word 'calling'.

‘The purpose of the church is to unite people with Christ in the power of the Spirit; to manifest communion in prayer and action and thus to point to the fullness of communion with God, humanity and the whole creation in the glory of the kingdom.’ (Canberra text para.3). The statement does not attempt to define further the content of the shared experience, but it does acknowledge that a certain degree of communion already exists between the churches: ‘this is indeed the fruit of the active presence of the Holy Spirit in the midst of all who believe in Christ Jesus and who struggle for visible unity now’ (para.7).

It is not hard to make the obvious connection, between what is expressed here in the Canberra statement, and the shared experience that charismatic renewal has manifested across the denominations, especially in its early days. But the statement goes on to say that the churches have failed to draw the consequences for their life from the degree of communion they have already experienced and the agreements already achieved: ‘they have remained satisfied to co-exist in division’ (para.8). Thus is indicated, the gap which exists between the degree of current theological agreement, and the gap the churches still have to close to manifest even that current agreement in their life and witness. The report then sets before the churches the areas where work needs to be done to close this gap.

#### **4.2. Koinonia in the life of the churches:**

The Canberra statement defines the *koinonia* it envisages as four targets:

1. The common confession of the apostolic faith as expressed through the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.
2. A common sacramental life entered by one baptism and celebrated together in one Eucharistic fellowship.
3. A mutual recognition of members and ministries.

4. A common mission witnessing to all people to the gospel of God's grace and serving the whole of creation.

The statement then fills out these propositions with some important explications. It sets an importance on churches being able to recognise in each other the 'one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church in all its fullness.' It sets a clear limit to permissible ecumenical diversity on a strong Christological basis:

Diversity is illegitimate when it makes impossible the common confession of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13v8); salvation and the final destiny of humanity as proclaimed in Holy Scripture and preached by the apostolic community.

It calls on churches to recognise each other's baptism on the basis of the BEM document. But there are strong clues to the breadth of ecumenical thinking and praxis in the last decades. For example: 'we gladly acknowledge that some, who do not observe these rites, share in the spiritual experience of life in Christ.' i.e. baptism, Eucharist, and ordained ministry. Groups such as the Salvation Army and the Quakers (Society of Friends) are now acknowledged in English ecumenism as examples of Christian assemblies, who though not having a formal credal and sacramental life, nevertheless adhere to the apostolic faith as observed from their worship and statements. Thus the ecumenical reality is acknowledged that if criteria are applied, which define and set boundaries, they unite some and exclude others. Credal and propositional agreements alone may be insufficient to be a basis for a united Christian church. The test of authenticity becomes recognition of the *koinonia* that exists across a boundary (or 'partially realised communion') before applying doctrinal tests; (see Avis below chapter 5).

### **4.3 Disappointed Reaction to Canberra**

On the face of it, Canberra was both a good summary and a hopeful statement of where an important Pan-Protestant section of the world's churches stand. However,

after Canberra, the Anglican theologian, and former Moderator of the WCC Commission on Faith and Order, Mary Tanner, expressed her sense of disappointment that there was a division of emphases between the search for visible Christian unity and the struggles for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Her concern was that neither in the plenary sessions nor in the final reports were the two themes inter-related theologically:

‘At times the discussions seemed little more than a platform for liberation from oppression and poverty through political activity...The reports often read like programmes of political parties. It is not surprising that the call has come again in this Assembly as in Vancouver for vital and coherent theology to undergird all of the Council’s work.’ (Tanner 1991b)

The Orthodox participants also expressed their unhappiness with the general trend of Canberra (and of the WCC in general where they perceive an increasing departure from its own basis). What they had to say is highly significant. They saw reflected in Canberra an increasing departure from the primary aim of restoring the visible unity of the church. They detected a ‘growing departure from biblically based Christian understandings of: the Trinitarian God, salvation, the ‘Good News’ of the Gospel itself, human beings as created in the image and likeness of God, and the church, among others.’ (*Reflections of Orthodox Participants* 1991)

So underneath a final plenary statement embodying the concept of *koinonia*, there exists for the Orthodox a disturbance of some significance in the area of the ‘limits of diversity’, particularly in the direction of *relations with other religions* (emphasis theirs. See Appendix 6). Some of this concern is reflected also by Mary Tanner’s paper above. She suggested that the Faith and Order Commission in its follow-up work to Canberra should tackle the important question of when inculturation becomes syncretism.

But the Orthodox concern touches on the key area of ecumenical methodology, and something which must be faced if, as Hollenweger suggests below, Pentecostalism

and ecumenism are to work much more intensely with each other. If *koinonia* is located first as an ‘experience’ word, then it cannot dispense with the frameworks of faith statements for its self-understanding. It needs discernment. Experience and propositional statements of faith must always remain in mutually critical dialogue and reciprocal judgement. Eugene Fairweather, in the Preparatory Commission for ARCIC, says: ‘It is only when a particular church is ready to cast a critical eye on its own past and present realisation of the Gospel, as well as on the doctrine and life of other churches, that it can pass from monologue to dialogue.’ (Avis 1986:76)

Karl Rahner adds: ‘One cannot today be totally committed to the Church without at the same time being involved in a critical relationship to her.’ (Avis 1986:77)

Tanner had noted prior to Canberra, that the theme was Spirit based, and the title a prayer: *Come Holy Spirit – Renew the Whole Creation*. Her hope was that the pragmatic style of Canberra, would be to ‘be open to receive the gifts the Holy Spirit will give us there: in and through our waiting on each other – waiting upon those who are bearers of the Holy Spirit, and ready to genuflect to each other as carriers of God’s Holy Spirit... ready to receive the Holy Spirit through the witness and experience of others; ready to seek for signs of the Holy Spirit in the life of the churches, and in the world ahead of us.’ (1991a). Hollenweger cites the astonishment of Donald Dayton, an expert of Pentecostal/ecumenical relationship in Latin America, when he heard of the rejection of a golden opportunity to table the experience of Pentecostals at the Canberra Assembly. At a meeting of the Commission of World Mission and Evangelism, it had been proposed that one plenary session at Canberra be devoted to exploring the missiological significance of Pentecostalism. The proposal met with a cavalier and flat rejection as ‘not in the official context’ (1997:369). (See the Athens conference in Appendix 6 on Orthodox.).

#### 4.4 Hollenweger's Ecumenical Vision for the WCC

John Mackay said that 'the true hope of ecumenism is the charismatic renewal' (see Hollenweger 1997:3). In his introduction to *Origins* (1997), Hollenweger states 'That Pentecostalism and ecumenism must find a way of working together much more intensely seems clear to any informed observer' (: 3) He continues to emphasise his ecumenical vision in the close of *Origins*, believing the WCC is the locus where Pentecostalism and ecumenism must officially engage:

The place where these insights and experiences can be tested, applied and worked through is the World Council of Churches. Neither the World Council nor the Pentecostals can work out a global system of communication and co-operation alone. Together they might have a chance....So, why not invest time, money, and persons in the World Council of Churches and bring it to life again? (1997:399)

He sees the current state of Pentecostalism as it has developed, to be very much narrow, defensive and fundamentalistic. It has forgotten that its roots lie in the soil of oral, narrative, bodily and therefore biographical theology. 'Pentecostalism has not yet found a mode of co-operation and communication that effectively expresses its global coherence and pluralism' (in Gros 1995:199). He sees that Pentecostalism in its roots is 'essentially tolerant and open to new, so far unknown moves of the Spirit'. He hopes for a Pentecostalism returned to its ecumenical roots as not just 'evangelicalism on fire' or a defender of orthodoxy, but a 'pioneer in new areas of the workings of the Spirit, as is clearly seen in the work of David Du Plessis and other Pentecostal ecumenists.' (1997:399). Thus, Hollenweger advocates a new liberation for Pentecostalism from any preset mould, that would channel and capture its energies. It has to be free to create; and if it is free it may well create the future coming ecumenical church that official ecumenism just fails to deliver despite its best efforts. Hollenweger's closing words in *Origins* (1997:400) are significant:

‘If Pentecostals and Catholics, independents and Anglicans, Methodists and charismatics, Presbyterians and “non-white indigenous churches’ dig deep enough into their own traditions, they might discover some considerable common ground (both of content and of form) for a global system of co-operation and communication.’

He stops short in this statement of explicitly seeing an organically reunited church; preferring networking, but he hints at the core methodology of the modern ecumenical dialogue in the phrase ‘digging deep enough into their own traditions’

#### **4.5 David J. Du Plessis**

An important underlying strand of Hollenweger’s ecumenical thought may derive from what has come to be known as the Du Plessis prophecy, which he labels as ‘probably the most important in the history of the Pentecostal movement’. Whilst in the quoted words of Smith Wigglesworth’s prayer over Du Plessis in 1936 there is no specific mention of ecumenism, yet there is predicted the mission of Du Plessis to take the message of Pentecost to all churches. This prophecy, according to Hollenweger, lay long dormant in Du Plessis for several years as he acted as unpaid general secretary of the World Pentecostal Conferences. But yet in the early 1950’s he made contact with the World Council of Churches offices in New York. To quote Hollenweger: ‘Du Plessis shared the general Pentecostal belief of that time, namely that the mainline churches—and in particular the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches—were hopelessly lost’. But significantly Du Plessis was to become the driving force behind the Vatican/Pentecostal dialogue (1997: 351,352). It is clear that Du Plessis represents for Hollenweger a sign of one of the pioneering new moves of the Spirit. Perhaps this is why taking a cue from Du Plessis’ access to the WCC, Hollenweger sees the WCC as the body likely to be the means of creating a worldwide co-operative instrument with Pentecostalism. Did he also perhaps see in

this direction of action, the fulfilment of the prophecy? It is possible, but that the path of official ecumenism is inevitably going to be more complex.

#### **4.6 Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order**

As a follow up to Canberra, a Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order was held in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, in August 1993. In the draft preparatory study document *Towards Koinonia in Faith, Life and Witness* (1992), there is a strong hint that there is a gap, which needs to be filled by bringing the Pentecostals into dialogue:

Furthermore, among new developments since 1963 ... the continuing growth of some evangelical and charismatic/Pentecostal movements which have so far remained outside the traditional ecumenical movement despite efforts towards a rapprochement (: 8).

The document does not spell out what the efforts towards rapprochement were, though Hollenweger notes in 1995 that the Assemblies of God General Council supported their anti-ecumenical decision by citing their “historic position”. (1997:398). The mention of the charismatic/Pentecostal movements as a point of note in that thirty year gap from 1963 (Fourth Faith and Order in Montreal) to 1993 is a significant pointer.

Nevertheless, quasi-global statements such as the *koinonia* statement from Canberra only have a ‘first step’ authority. They are maps for the future, and by themselves they cannot effect an actual Christian unity. At best the status of such documents is visionary, without being initially binding on the churches. Statements have to be referred back to the appropriate authoritative bodies in particular churches. For example: in the Lutheran/ Catholic *Declaration on Justification* (1997), John Reumann (1997) comments, that although the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the second largest church in the Lutheran World Federation, approved the statement by 97.5% in August 1997, the LWF council still needs to determine if a ‘positive Lutheran consensus’ exists with regard to paragraphs 40 & 41 (consensus on



the doctrine of justification). Decision at the highest level in the Vatican involves the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Mary Tanner notes:

Important theological convergences and agreements have been achieved in multilateral and bilateral statements since 1963. These dialogues, which have enriched each other with their insights and results, have thus, to a large degree, confirmed the expectation that they are complementary within the one ecumenical movement. (*Towards Koinonia*: 7)

#### **4.7 Describing an interim location for worldwide unity.**

It is well worth attempting to describe where the unity process has reached. The word 'describe' is certainly more correct than 'define', since unity is more than the involvement of the big denominations. It cannot be quantified by the number of dialogues in process or summed up by listing various categories of recognised ecumenical activities. The Canberra Assembly was the visible top of the iceberg. There are a range of elements and phenomena within the overall picture. A great part of ecumenical spirituality is informal, unaware of its significance, unstructured and yet nevertheless is vital to the overall effort. One ecumenist who has grasped this is again Tanner (above) who has described unity in terms of 'portrait'. (1997)

I want to describe a portrait which will capture something of the personal and relational life of the communion (koinonia) which God gives us...It must speak of the qualities of life together-the fruits of life in the Holy Spirit. I want to find a picture which will capture the rich and generous diversity, beyond my imagining, which will be borne out of the diversity of cultural traditions and out of the treasures each of our traditions has cradled in our separated lives and which need now to learn to offer to, and receive from, one another...I want to find a portrait that will capture an inclusive community of women and men, a dynamic fellowship that can risk staying together in spite of differences while it wrestles with the challenges to faith, order and moral life, in which those on opposing sides can bear the pain of difference and never again say to one another. 'I have no need of you.' I believe that visible unity will mean a community which shares the gifts of graced belonging which God offers in the faith of the Church: the sacraments (signs of the sacramentality of all life); the ministry of the whole people of God and in, with and among that the ordered ministry; bonds of grace, structures which will hold us connected to one another and enable us to discern together, take decisions, speak with conviction and teach with authority. These bonds

of grace will link the 'all in each place' to the 'all in every place' and the 'all through time'. I believe that visible unity must speak of a community strengthened to proclaim the good news in its words and in the fabric of its life, so that the church is a credible sign to the world of the possibilities which God offers to all people.

Portraits are inspirational, in that they point beyond themselves to the fuller reality, which exists, but still requires our imagination. It is difficult to edit this Tanner portrait as it seeks to capture the totality of the ecumenical scene. It is into that portrait that the engagement of the Pentecostal/charismatic world with organised ecumenism must fit. Each of these two streams needs to be aware of the treasures of the other. Tanner paints a verbal portrait because she recognises the reality that the ecumenical canvas must somehow encompass all the components. Ecumenism can never be the mere totality of dialogues, or doctrinal agreements. Tanner clearly advocates a sacramental *koinonia*, and uses 'communion' as a synonym. One essential component of Tanner's portrait is the 'staying together', the toleration of the inevitable differences. The way ahead towards visible unity is that everything has to be 'brought on to the table' and tolerably lived with for an indefinite period. There is a *raison d'être* here for the several ecumenical communities that exist to demonstrate just this. So Tanner's portrait is no romantic dream; it leads straight to the praxis.

#### **4.8 Santer on practical ecumenical issues**

Alongside Tanner, another Anglican, Mark Santer, former Co-chairman of ARCIC says that modern practical ecumenism has to be conducted in a climate described by some as an 'ecumenical winter'. The modern ecumenist has to be prepared to live and work with incompleteness, complacency and tensions, turmoil and apathy; in short: a mess. 'It is probable that ecumenists will have to live with these conditions throughout our lifetime.' (lecture to ecumenists in Birmingham mid-1990s). But having accepted these working co-ordinates the ecumenist also works with hope.

There is a climate of ongoing dialogue, which in turn contributes to the building up of knowledge, experience, understanding and tolerance. Underlying the ecumenists' work is the conviction that unity exists and is therefore possible. (cf Canberra: Unity as 'Gift..').

Generally speaking the totality of official ecumenism seems to be moving the churches towards a *recognition and reconciliation of ministries*. (This is clearly a crucial point. One only has to cite the Vatican Decree of 1870, which denied validity to Anglican Orders). The mutual recognition of ministries is a major acknowledgement that a degree of *koinonia* exists; it recognises a degree of 'ecclesiastical citizenship' across denominations. Recognition opens the door to interchangeability of ministries. This, in turn, moves the process forward to reconciliation and integration of life and mission. There is a partial realisation of this in the 800 or so Local Ecumenical Partnerships which now exist in England. (See chapter 1). Of LEP's, Santer asks: 'Is their collective experience beginning to say something? Is their cumulative effect starting to affect the denominational structures?'

Santer himself has been reputed to question the rationale of LEPs in so far as they 'institutionalise' division. Nevertheless, there seems no doubt that their collective weight has pushed the whole ecumenical scenario along in England. He also mentions the cruciality of 'pace.' 'We need to give each other time.' Time is needed for the process of osmosis and gestation which is essential for the transformation of so many denominations. Anyone who has worked ecumenically will substantiate this truism. Alongside this however, Santer asks some radical questions: 'When the Roman Catholic Church is viewed from the outside, one asks: 'how long can the monolithic structure hold?' The interest here is not so much speculation over the

answer; as why the question should be put at all. Is there something, which those who work 'close up' to the Roman Catholic Church know about its theoretical fragility, which is hidden from the majority. Santer cites the base communities among South American Catholics and asks the question, 'Do we need a Gorbachev, a presidential ecumenist, who can lead by presiding over the dissolution of old forms of establishment into fresh, powerful and more relevant shapes? God may initiate the unexpected'. Finally, Santer notes that standing as a high priority in the current ecumenical agenda has to be a fresh look at episcopacy. (see below). Once again he puts radical questions: 'Does the participating church which is Episcopal tend in the end to dominate? But if it does, why does it?'

Tanner's portrait and Santer's visionary pragmatism taken together, give a fair representation of the context, in which modern ecumenism is practised. This is the arena into which Pentecostal/charismatic ecumenical instincts must come and engage if they wish to be taken seriously. Cantalamessa believes that Pentecostal and charismatic phenomenon have a calling and responsibility in the question of Christian unity. 'In fact, it is the only existing 'movement' or reality that is genuinely interdenominational. (1991:203)

'...on its own, the way of official ecumenism will never achieve true Christian unity. I believe that this is where the role of the Pentecostal and charismatic reality fits in. It is not, nor can it be a 'transversal church', or a Church above Churches, but a prophetic force, a 'current of grace' within the Body of Christ, urging Christianity on towards renewal, evangelisation and unity.'

Gross (2003:29) also recognises the Pentecostal and Ecumenical movements as having a natural affinity rooted in the one Spirit. He sees four particular areas that challenge a response from the classical Pentecostal churches:

Reception of theology into congregational life, reception of the ecumenical results; reception of the ecumenical impulse by ecclesiastical leaders, and the role of Pentecostal scholars in the evangelical ecumenical movement. (2003:50)

#### **4.9 Summary**

This discussion, centred on *koinonia* ecclesiology, has indicated that at WCC level an inclusive term has been employed, which embraces several concepts of linkage between churches, and carrying a pneumatological overtone. They range from ‘communion’ and ‘fellowship’, to ‘citizenship’ and ‘recognition’. The *koinonia* (or ‘partially realised communion’) that exists across a denominational boundary, then becomes the test of Christian authenticity and recognition, before any doctrinal tests might be applied (see Avis chapter 6). *Koinonia* is another signpost that the thought and language of mainstream ecumenism is pointing in the direction of the experiential unity already actualised by many within the charismatic spectrum. This in turn calls for a matched theological response from the Pentecostal/charismatic milieu.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **BAPTISM AND EPISCOPACY**

The Canberra statement expressed the *koinonia* it envisaged in four particular ways (see above chapter 4): the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, a common sacramental life entered by one baptism and celebrated together in one eucharistic fellowship; mutual recognition of members and ministries, and a common mission.

In this chapter the focus is on two of those key areas: baptism and recognition of ministries. Within the latter, episcopacy has been a sticking point throughout the history of the ecumenical movement. The theology of baptism has been the locus of widely differing and polarised views for centuries, because it raises the question of Christian identity and the theology of efficacy of the sacraments.

Episcopacy raises the questions of church pastoral leadership, collegiality, magisterium, authority in matters of doctrinal formulation and pronouncement, validity and recognition of ministries, to name but a few linked issues.

#### **5.1.1 Baptism: the beginning of Christian life?**

The phrase: ‘baptism in the Spirit’, carries initiation overtones. The whole issue of what makes a Christian is germane to the theological discussion that emanates from the experience of spiritual renewal. It is also germane to ecumenism.

Individuals and churches are divided on the precise point at which Christian life begins. Is it possible to say that before point x someone was not a Christian, and after point x they were? Is point x at baptism or some other point in time? Does there have to be a point x at all? Most liturgies of baptism present that sacrament as the beginning of Christian life, but is it ‘ex-opere-operato’ in the same way that an anaesthetic works, or are there spiritual conditions required to trigger its effects? The

great polarity of approaches to baptism (and sacraments in general) is something that cannot be marginalized as a secondary issue in any serious ecumenical work.

In the more evangelical churches, 'conversion' has traditionally been the point where all that is involved in Christian initiation has been pressed into place. So 'conversion' means turning to Christ in faith, repenting of sin, and receiving the Holy Spirit. Baptism in water was seen generally as a secondary sign, and even among Baptists was only an act in obedience to Christ's example, with little in the way of a more sacramental theology (a 'wet witness' as David Pawson (see below) has said speaking of other Baptist ministers (conversation 1986))

The MD also immediately challenges Catholics, who claim to equate their baptism in the Spirit with 'becoming a Christian'. It sees it as a 'dangerous ambiguity on the lips of a person who was sacramentally baptised as an infant and became a Christian from that day. Doubtless he means that he has become fully conscious of his Christianity as a result of this baptism in the Spirit, which has proved such an overwhelming and memorable event in his life. (:145)

So Tugwell (1972:85), in initiation, brings together the Spirit, conversion and water baptism, in laying a foundation in readiness to bear the weight of his theology of 'baptism in the Spirit', (which term he goes on to reject). But it is not quite clear how Tugwell ties the three elements together. 'The full scriptural pattern, shows that the Holy Spirit is received precisely in conversion, in the gift of *metanoia*, the new life in Christ, and that this is experienced and evidenced sacramentally in baptism, in which we are born again 'of water and the Holy Spirit' (John 3:5)'.

### **5.1.2 'Sacramentalised but not Evangelised'**

It is easy to use this phrase as descriptive language, but it focuses a crucial area of theology for ecumenism. There is abundant evidence that evangelisation is a key

transition point in Christian experience. For many it is seen as the significant point x of initiation. O’Keeffe remarks: ‘It is not possible to be a Christian by proxy (from Suenens 1978:59). If the Catholic never says ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to his baptism then his relationship to Christ is a form of cultural Catholicism.’ (O’Keeffe:72).

Suenens (see chapter 2) focused on the crucial difference between individuals and societies that have been sacramentalised, but not evangelised. In the same Alpha News mentioned above (April-July 2004) the same phraseology is used again but this time by an Alpha Course leader in an American Lutheran Church, John Niiewald. Speaking of the changes coming over the congregation since many did the Alpha Course he says: ‘Now they have a passion to share with others. Before that they were sacramentalised, but not evangelised.’

Charles Whitehead is Chairman of the English National Service Committee for Catholic Charismatic Renewal in England. He describes his coming to faith as follows:

I came to a living faith 30 years ago in 1974 at the age of 32. I was evangelised through the witness of believing Christians and baptised in the Holy Spirit. Suddenly everything I had been taught about God fell into place and made sense—why had I not seen it before? The reality was that whilst my head had been full of knowledge about my Catholic faith, I had never been converted to Christ and his Gospel. I suppose I had been the sort of baptised Christian about whom Pope John Paul II is speaking when he says:

“Many Europeans today think they know what Christianity is, yet they do not really know it at all. Often they are lacking in knowledge of the most basic elements and notions of the faith. Many of the baptised live as if Christ did not exist: the gestures and signs of faith are repeated, especially in devotional practices, but they fail to correspond to a real acceptance of the content of the faith and fidelity to the person of Jesus” (Ecclesia in Europa 47).

This description fitted me perfectly until 1974, when for the first time I discovered that God actually speaks into our lives in a personal and powerful way. I was baptised in the Holy Spirit, because an Anglican priest (who did not know me at all) was prompted by the Holy Spirit to ask me directly if I knew how much God loved me. When I answered that I only knew this in theory, he prayed for me, and the following day I experienced a tremendous outpouring of God’s love, forgiveness and power.



Whitehead's story is typical of many thousands who come to 'a living faith' at some point in adult life. In earlier days, there was very much a 'house-style' of testimony which downplayed baptism (usually infant) almost to the point of insignificance, and certainly tended to dismiss pre-conversion churchgoing as religiosity with little or no value. Outstanding evangelist as he undoubtedly was, the late Canon David Watson was often given at a popular preaching level to citing the church institutional as a stumbling block to faith, though he later wrote *I believe in the Church* (1978). Again, it was as much a matter of 'house-style' as any deeply held conviction.

But Charles Whitehead owns his Catholic roots and upbringing much more positively. This is what is almost universally noticed among Roman Catholics who come to living faith, either through Alpha or certainly through the earlier 1970's days of Catholic Charismatic Renewal; there is no tendency to write off previous Catholic teaching or the sacrament of baptism in itself. However, Whitehead still uses the phrase 'converted to Christ', which is probably the equivalent of repentance. The use of 'and his gospel.' may not be absolutely correct in that Whitehead may have been, at least in his head, fully supportive of Christ's gospel from an early age, through his Catholic upbringing.

### **5.1.3 The Catholic/Pentecostal Dialogue (CPD)**

Baptism was a key topic in the dialogue and Kilian McDonnell (1995) notes that 'no topic was discussed with such passion as this one. Pentecostal John McTernan was of the opinion that it is the key issue.' Hollenweger opines that 'For many Pentecostal churches today adult baptism has become a more important issue than the gifts and life in the Spirit. He quotes Robeck and Sandige: 'Donald Gelpi has noted that 'the

most serious doctrinal differences dividing Catholic charismatics and Protestant Pentecostals lie in the area of sacramental theology.’ (Hollenweger 1997:261).

Hollenweger adds the important balancing comment that ‘What may not be so obvious is that one aspect of ‘sacramental’ theology, baptism, has led to more intense debate and divided more Pentecostal churches than any other issue the movement has faced.’ (Robeck ‘Ecclesiology’:505). Karkainen also highlights Robeck and Sandidge’s survey on the variety of baptismal practice within Pentecostal churches. He describes the diversity as astonishing: immersion or sprinkling, even effusion or aspersion, infants as well as adults, candidates ranging from ‘backslidden’, reconverted, those already baptised in infancy (re-baptism), those improperly baptised (:303). Interestingly the list mentions diversity in the important Pentecostal matter of the relation of Spirit–baptism and water baptism in a chronological sense. It is not simply a question of infant versus believers’ baptism, but of the mode of baptismal grace in relation to personal faith at any age of the subject, as well as the pastoral practice of the churches in administering baptism. In short, most of the dividing issues between churches can be focused directly or indirectly around the baptismal area. McDonnell continues:

RCs recognise the baptism performed by Pentecostals in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Catholics believe that by virtue of baptism Pentecostals and Roman Catholics already enjoy a certain, though imperfect, koinonia, The Catholics drew ecclesiological consequences...The Pentecostals also believed that they have a certain, though imperfect, koinonia with Catholics, but not on the basis of a common water baptism. Rather the basis is a common faith and experience of Jesus and his Spirit. This experiential faith is what makes Catholics authentic Christians, not baptism. Most Pentecostals view baptism as an ordinance, not a sacrament. Pentecostals reject infant baptism because babies cannot have a conscious response to faith. Catholics wondered at the Pentecostal insistence on believer’s baptism when, as Catholics understand Pentecostal teaching, nothing much seems to happen.

There is also the interesting fact of pastoral practice with the Catholics that pastors are bound to delay or refuse baptism in cases where Christian nurture of the infant is not likely to occur, (see discussion below). McDonnell further notes that both Catholics

and Pentecostals believe that faith precedes and is a precondition of baptism to be authentic. They disagree in some areas as to how this faith operates. (McDonnell 1995:177). McDonnell makes the interesting observation that ‘Catholics need to disavow the mistaken notion that all Pentecostals are sectarians and fundamentalists. Nonetheless, when Catholics find that many of the Pentecostals in the dialogue are exegetically sophisticated, this does not necessarily mean that Catholics will agree with the Pentecostal interpretation of scripture. When Pentecostals learn that Catholics do not put tradition on the same level with Scripture, Pentecostals do not thereby agree with the Catholic position on the relation of scripture to tradition.’ (McDonnell:171).

Dialogue is a realistic edging towards one another. In one sense the V-P dialogue was ‘safe’ in that it was not intended to pursue the goal of structural unity, and therefore in that sense there was nothing to lose. It might be correct to describe the V-P dialogue as ‘containing most other dialogues,’ since the theological and ecclesiological spectrum across it, encompasses the whole range.

It may not be too much to describe the differences over baptism as ‘bridging the great divide’ (see Bridge and Phypers 1977). This division under-spans the Catholic-Protestant divide in a large measure. (Perhaps not so much the Orthodox-Catholic divide). However, if this division could be bridged theologically, the way would open up ecclesologically towards the visible re-union of the church. What seems to be required is a newly constructed theology, which combines and does justice to a sacramental view of initiation on the one hand, and the essential personal faith elements on the other.

Importantly, McDonnell cites Tertullian, who clearly expected that ‘after the water bath and the imposition of hands, prayer ‘inviting and welcoming the Holy Spirit’,

expectation that a charism would be received was integral to the rite of initiation as presented by Tertullian in the first centuries of the Church's life. If this is true, it means that baptism in the Spirit belongs not to private piety, but to the public official liturgy. This places Baptism in the Spirit in a wholly new light. Baptism in the Spirit is, then, integral to those sacraments (baptism, confirmation, eucharist) which are constitutive of the deepest nature of the church.' (: 219).

Karkainen further adds the exciting perception: 'In terms of conciliar understanding of Christian initiation and Spirit-baptism, this thesis is highly suggestive, worth being picked up by an ecumenical forum beyond Roman Catholics and Pentecostals.' (: 219).

Muhlen (1978) has made a significant contribution to Catholic charismatic sacramental theology by positing that sacraments are the 'expressions of the one charismatic self-surrender of Jesus.' (:124). He sees charisms of Jesus 'deposited' in the sacraments and thus made available in the church down through history. Muhlen assumes the seven sacraments of Catholicism as opposed to the two: baptism and Eucharist, of Protestantism. Thus penance is posited as repetition of the repentance presupposed in baptism. Anointing of the sick preserves the charism of healing. Confirmation (see below) preserves Jesus' prophetic charism. Holy Orders is a charism for 'awakening the charisms of others'. Marriage is an 'imitation' of Jesus' self-surrender for us.' (see Ephesians 5 v1f), (:124,125).

Muhlen develops the theology forward as far as confirmation is concerned. He sees an important significance in the recovery of confirmation as 'sacramental baptism of the Spirit' (:132) and senses a 'two stage' initiation in baptism and confirmation which mirrors a little of the Pentecostal scheme of conversion and Spirit baptism. He doesn't equate them, but genuinely sees the confirmation as a locus for significant

activity of the Spirit in the liturgical context. (:140). Gelpi supports Muhlen in this. He sees a Catholic theology of confirmation and 'a classical Protestant Pentecostal theory of 'second blessing' have a certain affinity and might provide an opening for a fruitful ecumenical exchange.'(1975:177) For Catholics, the Spirit is imparted in baptism and confirmation, whatever one makes of 'Baptism in the Spirit' as a separate experience. Muhlen advances the notion that confirmation is a sacrament, 'which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the church.'(:140). He is anxious to see in the confirmation rite, the opportunity for the reality of the Holy Spirit to become effective in the life of the Christian. (:139). Despite prayer for the Spirit, the rite of confirmation as popularly practised has been lacking in expectation. Seen very much in times past as a youth-dedication, expectation of the Spirit to manifest in the experience of the candidate has been low or non-existent. By contrast, the Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostals tend to equate authenticity with the informality or semi-formality of the Baptism of the Spirit imparted through a prayer group with the laying-on-of-hands. Consequently expectation of 'something happening' is high. The latter often overlook the fact that many people, in a renewal context, are prayed for in a 'quasi-sacramental' setting such as the Life in the Spirit seminars or the Alpha course (see above). So a heightened sense of personal expectation when Catholics seek the Baptism in the Spirit, especially if it could be contextualised in the rite of confirmation, could be very important in the future praxis of the renewal. (Muhlen: 139).

This personal expectation in faith as far as Catholics are concerned, brings them into parallel with the more Protestant denominations, for whom Christian initiation is *a priori* a matter of personal response in faith to a preached Gospel. There is, of course, no guarantee in Protestant rites that faith can be presumed upon as a matter of course;

but the bringing back together of a revised sacramental theology, such as Muhlenposits, which sees sacraments as ‘deposited-charisms’, has profound ecumenical significance. Such a parallelism in theology would be a significant precursor to steps in visible unity. Perhaps the locus of an Anglican Confirmation service, which has often been thought of as a rite in search of a theology (see Ely Report 1971), could be the point where, what has become largely a routine rite of passage into communicant status, could recover its sense of expectancy of Spirit-Baptism and consequent charism. It would seem that the only difference between a group of earnest seekers at a Holy Spirit weekend on an Alpha course, and an average batch of Anglican confirmation candidates, kneeling before a bishop, lies in the area of expectant faith. There could be much to gain ecumenically here, if this mismatch in faith expectation is addressed pastorally. There is usually teaching on the Holy Spirit in Confirmation preparation, but until the coming of charismatic renewal, expectancy of the Spirit in any tangible way was low, and reference to the Spirit was largely subverted in the liturgical rite itself. O’Keeffe sees the gift of the Spirit sacramentally reinforced in Confirmation (:76). He also argues for a change in disposition: ‘the power is there but it is lying, as it were, dormant, unused. What is needed is a change in our disposition’.

One factor in lack of expectation is probably (until recently) widespread infant baptism. In chapter 3, K.Ranaghan mentions this as a major reason for the attenuation of the charismata in the patristic centuries. Large scale infant baptism required later instruction, compulsory church attendance, with the rite of confirmation admitting to communion. Then followed a priestly pastoral discipline to keep the flock (or a significant proportion of them) faithful throughout their lives. Christian discipleship, at a popular level, developed into being a rather formal adherence to a credal faith

through ritual and rule keeping. Somewhere in the process the firsthand experience of charismata had become obscured and generally not expected. Undoubtedly the phenomenon of widespread infant baptism as a norm has contributed perhaps more than anything else to the largely notional Christian society, which has shaped the histories of many of the older western nations. (See Appendix 8).

This point is brought out strongly by Karkainen, quoting Kuzmic and Volf:

A decision for or against the practice of adult (believers') baptism is to a large extent a decision for or against a particular social form of the church. There is a distortive tendency for the church consisting of those baptised in infancy to take a form of 'non-committal religious society' both in relation to Christ and to one another. The practice of believers' baptism, on the contrary, leads to a social form of the church as a fellowship consisting of persons who freely respond to the call of God (:215).

Because the issue of justification was foundational, the Protestant Reformation bequeathed a great division to the western church, which polarised approaches to Christian initiation. Christians became such through repentance and faith upon hearing and responding to the Word of God, preached from Holy Scripture. The Protestants rejected instrumental notions of water baptismal grace working *ex opere operato*. Conversion was the looked for effect in the individual life and conversion also was the door of the Holy Spirit. Thus water baptism was seen as merely a token - symbol of new birth at best and in many cases not essential at all. (In the Church of England's 39 articles, water baptism is 'generally necessary to salvation'). Furthermore, if baptism is seen as an ordinance and only undertaken positively because of the Dominical example at the River Jordan, can only be relevant to believers. Hence it is easy to understand why, as McDonnell quotes above, the Catholics perceive that nothing much seems to happen when Pentecostal (adults) are baptised.

#### **5.1.4 A fresh theology of Baptism**

So can a fresh theology of baptism be developed which would hold together the stream of sacramental thought down the 'catholic centuries' and also to the experiential reality of evangelisation, as understood in the Protestant forum?

Christopher Hill advances an interesting line of theological construction. He suggests grounding the ontological continuity of the church in an ecumenical exploration of a *baptismal* (emphasis Hill's) ecclesiology rather than simply an Episcopal one, and suggests coupling it to the theology of justification. He adds:

'The grounding of the continuing identity of the Church must be in Christ's presence among all his people by the power of the Spirit. Baptism as well as the Eucharist is the sign of this because, amongst other things, it manifests the permanent status of the Christian as an adopted child of God...' (2004:118)

Hill has the sense of a return to the primal sacrament of baptism and he sees the Holy Spirit as very strongly linked to the sacramental. If one is going to invoke the theology of justification as Hill does here, it surely brings us back to the baptismal discussion above on 'sacramentalised but not evangelised'. If one argues to wrest continuing identity of the church from episcopacy (see below), one ought not to revert into another tight sacramentalism. But the hopeful sign in Hill's essay is the grounding of the continuity of the church in the Spirit's presence. This does not allow us to by-pass the discussion on baptismal regeneration, but Hill offers the Pentecostal /Charismatic the chance to dialogue as he relocates baptism pneumatologically. (See also Michel Quesnel (1996), which is a very good attempt to parallel and inter-relate the catholic 'sacramentals' with Baptism in the Holy Spirit.).

So how possible is it to have a theology of baptism, which could command assent across (say) the Pentecostal-Catholic divide? The first challenge to Pentecostals is to ask them if they can admit that *something* might happen *instrumentally* in baptism (emphasis mine). Regardless of whether a baptism is adult, child or infant, is there something, which is conveyed through the rite in itself? O'Keeffe (:73,74) notes that



Dunn (1970) in using the term: 'conversion-initiation' to cover the total event of becoming a Christian, tries to deny any sacramental efficacy to water baptism. 'He (Dunn) is forced in the face of Romans 6.4, John 3.5, and 1 Peter 3.21 to affirm merely symbolic and occasional causality.' After all, the principal action of Pentecostals viz. the laying-on-of-hands for the empowering of the Holy Spirit, is quasi-sacramental and generally viewed as transmitting something. Individuals are invited to 'believe' in the gift given, even if feelings are not yet present to validate the reception of the gift. Is this not implying an objectivity to 'spirit-baptism'? Could not this same objectivity be applied to water baptism? The issue centres around the propensity for faith on the individual's part.

The challenge to Catholics (and probably Anglicans and other churches where infant-baptism is still the norm) is to ask how faith works in Christian initiation. The language of salvation in Ephesians 2 v 8,9 is the priority of grace accessed through faith. The gift element is stressed in contrast to works. Complementing this in Romans 6, Paul sees baptism as entering into the death and resurrection of Christ. The latest Anglican-Orthodox report also emphasises this point: 'St. Paul insists that baptism unites us with Christ in His death and resurrection (Romans 6.1-11)...At our baptism the Spirit forms Christ in us.' (2006:36 para 40). In 1 Corinthians 12v13 Paul describes the church as those 'baptised by one Spirit into one body'. In the mind of Paul therefore, there is some evidence that he saw sacramental baptism as conveying grace accessed by faith, with the Spirit 'doing the initiating'. There is not in Paul, a neat cluster of sentences, which package his baptismal theology. It probably wasn't needed at that point in time in quite the same way. Nevertheless, *accessing objective grace through faith, whether in the water rite of baptism or otherwise*, (emphasis mine) could be taken as the keel in the construction of a

baptismal theology which holds these polarities of emphasis together. Indeed it may be more accurate to describe sacramentalists and grace/faith initiators not as two polarities, but as opposite sides of one coin.

#### **5.1.5 Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry** (1982. Faith and Order Paper no.111)

In the preface to the Lima report (BEM), the conviction that has been expounded above finds confirmation. ‘...if the divided churches are to achieve the visible unity they seek, one of the essential pre-requisites is that they should be in basic agreement on baptism, eucharist and ministry. Naturally therefore, the Faith and Order Commission has devoted a great deal of attention to overcoming doctrinal division on these three. During the last fifty years, most of its conferences have had one or another of these subjects at the centre of discussion.’ (preface: viii) The preface defines *convergence* as ‘the process of growing together in mutual trust...until they are finally able to declare together that they are living in communion with one another in continuity with the apostles and the teachings of the universal Church.’ It is acknowledged that ‘the Holy Spirit has led us to this time, a *kairos* of the ecumenical movement.’ (preface: x)

The actual length of the agreed text is relatively short. In some ways this is surprising and in another way not so. The text only represents that which can be affirmed together at that point in time (1982) by the churches. The commentary indicates areas where further discussion is needed and makes pertinent interpretive comments. It sees baptism clearly as the locus and focus of Christian initiation. It holds together in careful sentences both imagery, sign and sacramentality. ‘Baptism is the sign of new life...it unites the one baptised with Christ and with his people.’ The text groups phrases such as ‘participation in Christ’s death and resurrection, washing away of sin, new birth, enlightenment by Christ, renewal by the Spirit’ as ‘imagery’. ‘The images

are many but the reality is one.’ (BEM :2.para 2). Paragraph 5 has: ‘The Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of people before, in and after their baptism’ There is here an interesting measure of concurrence with the Gorham judgement (see Appendix 8). The time scale of the working of the Spirit is then extended without denying the continuity of the Spirit’s work since initiation.

God bestows upon all baptised persons the anointing and the promise of the Holy Spirit, marks them with a seal and implants in their hearts the first instalment of their inheritance as sons and daughters of God. (para C5)

Pentecostals might have some disquiet with the notion of the Spirit being bestowed simply upon the ‘sacramentalised’, but the previous paragraph restores the balance by stating: ‘The baptism which makes Christians partakers of the mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection implies confession of sin and conversion of heart’, and to make the point stronger: ‘those baptised are pardoned, cleansed, and sanctified by Christ, and are given as part of their baptismal experience a new ethical orientation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.’ (para B4). The issue is clear for any Pentecostal doubters by the statement under ‘Baptism and Faith’: ‘Baptism is both God’s gift and our human response to that gift, the necessity of faith for the reception of the salvation embodied and set forth in baptism is acknowledged by all churches. Personal commitment is necessary for responsible membership in the body of Christ. (BEM :3 para. 8).

The commentary adjoining these texts (:3) states: ‘The need to recover baptismal unity is at the heart of the ecumenical task as it is central for the realisation of genuine partnership within the Christian communities.’ This is stating the obvious and superficially, the texts just quoted might seem in themselves just the bedrock that could lead to such baptismal unity. However, as the text expands into more detail the

significant differences of baptismal practice start to re-emerge. So it is no surprise to find some statements on the traditional polarities of infant and believers' baptism:

'In the case of infants, personal confession is expected later, and Christian nurture is directed to the eliciting of this confession.' The text then puts its finger on a practice which has probably done much to weaken the sense of baptism in the popular mind, namely, the separating of baptism away from main worship, leaving it especially in the case of infants, as a private family affair.

'At every baptism the whole congregation reaffirms its faith in God and pledges itself to provide an environment of witness and service. Baptism should therefore, always be celebrated and developed in the setting of the Christian community.' (: 4 para 12).

### **5.1.6 Summary**

From this short discussion on baptism, enough has been said to show that there is a distinct possibility that there could be a breakthrough in the area of baptismal theology leading to ecumenical agreement. But equally divergences seem to exist in the area of pastoral discipline and preparation for the rite, either of the adult candidates or of the parents of those bringing infants and young children to baptism. The latter must be ready to consider carefully calls for delaying the age at which baptism generally takes place. The 'Baptists' need to be prepared to admit more sacramental objectivity in the rite. Both poles need to re-grasp the initiatory realities that the early church held together, i.e. personal profession of faith, the gift of the Spirit, repentance, commitment and the rite of water baptism itself. In this way eventual agreement could be reached across the church. In the same way, in which the Patristic Church wrestled with Creeds through ecumenical councils, before arriving at statements, which commanded the widest agreement; so perhaps there needs to be a Catholic-Protestant-Pentecostal forum, (initially confined to the charismatic milieu on this matter), which could work towards an agreed baptismal theology and practice.

A mutual recognition of each denomination's members would be the logical outcome of the work of a reconstructed and mutually agreed baptismal theology. That in itself could lay the foundation of a visibly united church.

## **5.2 Episcopacy**

If baptismal agreement is fundamental to visible Christian unity and the possibility of achieving it an exciting prospect, then the subject of ministerial oversight: *episcopacy* rivals baptism as one of the two crucial theological knots to be untied. Episcopacy is still a matter of considerable debate in ecumenical circles and like baptism, approaches to the problem come from opposing starting points. This section examines the roots of the issue and discusses ways out of the cul-de-sac. In the process, the relevance of charismatic thinking and experience is relevant, and 'apostles of unity' are discovered.

### **5.2.1 A recent book on Church of England ecumenism**

A recently published collection of essays by a group of Anglican ecumenists, sets out to explicate where it perceives the Church of England's official ecumenical efforts to have reached. (Avis-ed.2004). The essays are assiduous in their analyses and they supply a clear answer to a question that has been emerging clearly from grass roots ecumenism (mainly from Local Ecumenical Partnerships, County Ecumenical Bodies and Churches Together Groups): Given the ecumenical groundswell that is now normal at the local level, why cannot the denominational authorities now agree to move to denominational mergers?

This new book goes a long way to explicating why church unity is not that simple and one might say that episcopacy is one of the key issues to disentangle.

In a recent review of the book by a United Reformed Church Minister, Donald Norwood (2004) puts it thus:

‘When a group of distinguished Anglicans sit down together to write about Church Unity, one wonders whom they are speaking to. We can see who they have been listening to. (WCC documents and the various dialogues) ...but can we expect real progress in Unity if all we hear are our own echoes from others who already belong to the same church? Dissenters like myself can hear ourselves speaking through Evangelical Anglicans like Michael Green and former Archbishop George Carey who question old assumptions about bishops as successors of the apostles and essential for unity.’

The stand-point of this particular reviewer is as a Protestant /evangelical. The reference to Michael Green and George Carey shows that he has found serious comfort in Martin Davie’s essay. Davie argues that whilst the Church of England is very forward and creditably engaged in ecumenical dialogue with several other denominations, yet its laudable efforts represent, by and large, the Liberal-Catholic consensus. He points out that there are generally dissenting voices from the evangelical end of the Church of England, and that these are often not taken into account seriously. (Davie 2004) Davie cites E.J.Bicknell’s commentary on the Thirty-Nine, articles with reference to Article XIX:

The continuity of historical and sacramental life, which to the ‘catholic’ is embodied in the continuity of the episcopate and is one important aspect of the continual abiding of the Church in Christ, is unintelligible to the ‘Protestant’ who finds continuity in the faithful acceptance and preaching of God’s word and believes that a group or body of Christians which is faithful in this way may legitimately set up its own form of ministry. For this and other reasons there is no general agreement as to the shape of the visible unity towards which Christians should move. (1955:244)

### **5.2.2 The Historic Episcopal issue**

What is the ‘episcopal problem’ as far as ecumenism is concerned? The traditional debate within Anglicanism, for example, has centred on whether ‘bishops’ are of the *esse* or *bene esse* of the church. Are they a historically proven good way (*bene esse*) of governing the church as opposed to other forms of oversight, or are they *constitutive* of the church, in the real sense that without them there can be no true

church (the *esse*). There are churches which have ‘bishops’ in a governmental structural sense, for example the ‘Free Church of England’, and some orders of the Black Majority Churches in England. But they would understand bishops as of the *bene esse* of Christ’s church; a good thing but not essential. This position would generally apply to Anglican evangelicals. Anglo-Catholics on the other hand, would see bishops as essential to the *authenticity* of the church (emphasis mine) This in turn is contingent upon certain qualifiers, the principal one being that the episcopate must be the ‘historic episcopate’ i.e. it must be derived from, and in directly continuous descent from the apostles. Thus, the historic episcopate somehow guarantees the ‘apostolicity’, and carries the sense of fidelity of that particular church to apostolic teaching.

Thus when unity is the goal to be aimed at, the issue turns very much on how churches, which do not possess the historic episcopate, can be joined with one that does. (A classic example would be the Church of England and the Methodist Church). The cul-de-sac of the insistence of the requirement of the historic episcopate is mentioned in *Growing into Union* (1970) (see chapter 2). It sets one church in a tone of historical superiority over another, usually with the request that the non-episcopal church should set its house in order by ‘taking the historic episcopate into its system’. It then becomes ‘unitable with’. Some fifty years ago, Bell (1948) suggested that reunion should be a fellowship of episcopal churches. The Councils of Bishops would again become, *as they were in antiquity* (emphasis mine), the permanent ‘organ by which the unity of distant Churches could find expression without any derogation from their rightful autonomy’. He then adds the crucial statement that ‘The English Free Churches could enter into this fellowship simply by receiving bishops from any Church possessing the historic episcopate’. (1948:183,185)

A logical consequence of this unilateral request is the implication that because only the bishop can ordain presbyters, the ministries of the non-Episcopal church are at best defective and at worst *invalid*. That in turn raises the question of the validity of the sacraments. The non-episcopal churches will inevitably come to be regarded as defective in the sense of possessing less than the fullness of truth. The practice of the Roman Catholic Church since Vatican II of referring to other 'ecclesial communities' illustrates this. (although this is actually a step forward, because it actually recognises the existence of other bodies)

If thus 'the bishop', is constitutive of the church, the collegiality of the bishops illustrates the *catholicity* of the church and hence its *visible unity*. The logical outcome is that if visible unity of the church is the goal, then to achieve it, churches should possess the historic episcopate. Thus the cardinal issues of *authenticity, apostolicity, catholicity, visibility, validity and unity* all somehow hang on the concept of one particular understanding of episcopacy. This point is spelt out *a fortiori* by Michael Ramsey, who sees the outward visible form of an episcopally united church as expressing the gospel message. '...the Apostles are both a link with the historical Jesus and also the officers of the one ecclesia, whereon every local community depends. Hence the whole structure of the Church tells of the gospel.'(1936:50) Ramsey thus argues that the very nature of the gospel entails the necessity for the existence of a common form of outward church order involving the ministry of bishops.

Needless to say, not all churches accept this particular theory of episcopal essentiality. If insisted upon exclusively, it is unlikely to bring an organic unity to the Christian churches. In *Apostolicity and Succession* (1994 para.9) reference is made to the stumbling block of historical succession in the formation of the Church of South



India. Colin Buchanan (1998b) notes that in the case of Lesslie Newbigin, in the Church of South India his ordination had no validity in the eyes of some until Anglican bishop's hands were laid on him!

The fortunate reality is that this particular theory has undergone considerable analysis and restatement in recent times, mainly as a result of the ecumenical dialogues; and it is fair to say that it appears to be shaking itself loose from its dogmatic status.

The present task is to attempt an understanding of the concepts lying behind historical episcopacy as a phenomenon, and to seek a way of broadening them to incorporate other ecclesiologies on the way towards visible unity.

### **5.2.3 The transmission of Ecclesial Authority**

Whatever the polity of any local church, ministerial spiritual authority (particularly pastoral and teaching authority) generally exhibits three main dimensions. There is first the inward call from 'above', from the Holy Spirit (say). Second, there is the local congregational element, which may recognise and confirm the call in the candidate. In some cases the congregational 'call' may have come first. Third there is the *magisterium*, which tests a vocation, and if satisfied ordains a candidate to an order.

In the real process of appointing to ministerial order and in an actual pastoral post, all three dimensions will almost certainly be present. It is rare that an episcopal figure or the equivalent in non-episcopal churches would act alone. The long process of enquiry, taking references, interview, selection, and training, means that many people have say in the actual birthing of any individual ministry.

The same three dimensions are present when a new bishop is chosen and consecrated.

This applies whether a Diocese ‘elects’ its bishop, e.g. Anglican Church in Australia, is appointed by a partially elected commission with state input (as in England), or whether it is the college of Cardinals electing the Bishop of Rome.

His authority operates collegially, both locally with his assistant bishops, and priests (presbyters), and wider than the local, through his consultation with his fellow bishops. Bishops do not arrive on the local church scene from a sealed cage of doctrinal purity, so that their mere presentation in oversight to a group of local Christians somehow guarantees the continuity of ‘the faith’. Real bishops emanate from the ‘laos’, the people of God. They are known for their gifts, stances and opinions over a wide area of territory and time before they are consecrated and appointed. There is nothing inimical to having an Episcopal Church, and a ‘spiritual’ church.

Even from this short sketch, it is easy to see that the bishop, as elected representative of a wider group of presbyters, does begin to be the sign of the local church on the wider scene. Nevertheless, the church, through its several interacting processes of ministerial calling and appointment of presbyters and bishops, in consultation with the whole people of God, is perfectly capable of transmitting the truth of the Gospel diachronically down through time. However, this is not in itself an argument for bishops as the *esse* of the church.

There still remains the lurking question of how other forms of church government and their senior posts relate to traditional episcopacy. For example when the Ten Propositions and Covenant for Unity were being debated, the issue arose of the status of United Reformed Church Moderators. Were they equivalent to Anglican bishops in terms of oversight? Would they mind, if they were later designated ‘bishops’ in a future united church? Similar considerations were applied to Methodist District

Chairmen. These points were not merely semantic, nor simply a matter of task comparison. A Methodist District Chair and a URC Moderator might be perceived as of a similar ‘rank’ to an Anglican bishop, yet Moderators and Chairs are elected to office for a fixed term of years, and cease to hold the ‘rank’ when they go out of office. This procedure reflects a familiar New Testament exegesis of ‘presbyters’ being the senior ministers whilst ‘episcopos’ implied a ‘first among equals’ presbyter. Nevertheless, Anglicans regard the episcopate as a third order of ministry (as do the Roman Catholics and Orthodox), which a person still retains even when ceasing to hold office. (The doctrine of the indelibility of orders.). But is there evidence that a threefold order of ministry emerged smoothly in the sub-apostolic age? If the answer is taken as affirmative, then what do we know of the process by which the New Testament ministries metamorphosed into it? The Anglican–Orthodox report summarises the process thus:

In the New Testament the local churches never appear without *episcopos*, or oversight, the ministry of care rooted in the Gospel.... There is scholarly debate regarding the early forms of *episcopos*.... At the beginning of the second century the Ignatian epistles provide the first unequivocal evidence of the three distinct but cohering ministries of bishop, presbyter, and deacon, of which the bishop provides *episcopos*....Historically it is safe to conclude that the apostles did not hand on a fixed ministerial structure to a college of bishops as part of a clearly defined threefold order.. The picture is one of gradual development from an *episcopos* always present, into a pattern of one bishop in each local church, who functioned at a local level, without any centralised control.’ (Anglican Communion 2006: 59,60. Paras. 3,4).

The Didache (Staniforth 1968:225f) has an interesting passage, which sheds some light into the twilight zone of the sub-apostolic era. Staniforth, in his introductory note, says that the Didache fitted into the period when ‘travelling missionaries’ were still the chief officers of the Church and bishops had not yet become distinguished from presbyters. The text of the Didache refers particularly to the issue of testing the genuineness of these travelling apostles and prophets. The advice is very much a matter of observing behaviour to see if it matched profession. The evidence is that

there was clearly a phenomenon of travelling apostles and prophets, who had a prima-facie authority; but that there were also counterfeits who should not simply be taken at face value and given food and money. Two days was the maximum allowed stay of an individual prophet in a locality. Although the issue is the true/false visitor, yet the Didache suggests that they had authority if genuine: ‘...should be welcomed as the Lord.’ (: 233)

What might be assumed is that by the end of the second century the authority of the itinerant ‘apostle’ had largely passed from the creative initiatory mission phase to the established local phase; the presbyters. It may well have been that this pattern was indeed the Holy Spirit’s intention as the norm of church government. What may be described as the collegial authority of the bishops (first ecumenical councils) was demonstrated early on in church history and may well have had roots in the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15). It could well be that this was the pattern of government, discerned by spiritual pragmatism, that was clearly emerging by the middle to end of the second century. It gained acceptance as pragmatically normal, without looking for any theory to justify it.

#### **5.2.4 Charism and Institution**

This leads to the important issue of the actual gift of oversight as ‘charisma’. O’Keeffe, picking up on Ephesians 2.20, (‘...built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets’), says ‘extend apostles and one comes to office; extend prophets and one comes to charismata (:231)...formal authority and charismatic authority need one another as a check and balance’. (see Haughey 1978:101). Office without the pressure of charism becomes rigid. Charism without the stability of office can become anarchy’ (:232). It was stated above that bishops are appointed because they are perceived to possess the gifts and calling required for the task of oversight, that is

required of the church in a particular location at a particular time. This suggests that oversight itself is a spiritual gift, and therefore implies a charismatic ecclesiology. Haughey supports this: 'One could list hundreds of bishops the world over whose power to influence their people is much more charismatic than it is due to the office they occupy.'(1978:101).

One notes an interesting comparison here with the approach of modern Restorationists (see below) who tend to practice the recognition of 'gifts, giftings and anointings' of individuals for ministry. Ministers are placed in authority in Restorationist churches by virtue of their perceived ministries. Should those gifts cease to be evident or the 'anointing' move away, an individual's 'ministry' is quite likely to cease. The individual will be removed from 'office'. So returning to Anglicanism: a 'gifted' bishop is not in itself an argument for bishops as of the *esse* of the church. Here the differences between Catholic (including Anglo-Catholic) and Protestant start to emerge. Haughey notes that 'Protestant ecclesiology tends to play office off against charism; the idea being that the Spirit operates in the latter but not the former.' (1978:100). '...the one is intrinsically related to the other. These two sources of power, operating in and through individuals in the Church, are both from the Spirit.'(: 101). Gelpi agrees. '(The Protestants)...an unfortunate tendency to disassociate the gifts of the Spirit from the institutional expressions of religion.' (1975:177). Laurentin is pessimistic: '..history shows that the peaceful co-existence of institution and charisms has always been beset with difficulties, from the beginning of church history down to our own time.' (1977:143). But he defines the task as 'Can evangelical revivals be organically integrated into the life of a Church whose own tradition asserts that it must be constantly renewed and reformed (*semper reformanda*)?' (:144). Laurentin notes that even Luther was forced to suppress the

‘enthusiasts’ (:145). Like Tugwell, Laurentin is an integrator. The charisms need to be assimilated without suppression.

Raniero Cantalamessa (1991) sees charismatic renewal and official ecumenism as inherently complementary in the life of the church. ‘Charismatic unity was that which the Holy Spirit operated on the day of Pentecost, uniting ‘Jews, devout men from every nation.’ (Acts 2 v 5) and also seen in uniting Jews and Gentiles in the centurion Cornelius’s house (Acts 10-11).’ He continues:

In this charismatic phase the divine initiative prevails, which manifests itself in an unpredictable, powerful and creative way. There isn’t time, or necessity, to discuss, deliberate or emanate decrees...The Spirit precedes, the institution must necessarily follow...This unity is not simply doctrinal, or of faith, but total: the believers are of ‘one heart and soul’ (Acts 4 v 32). It’s a sort of ‘fusion by fire’, a melting point.

Yet he sees charismatic unity alone as insufficient. He examples the issue of the widows being neglected in the daily distribution of food (Acts 6 v 1f). ‘How was unity saved and re-established? The apostles made discernment. They appointed deacons. Authority intervened where charismatic spontaneity didn’t suffice.’(1991:202). He then adds the key example of the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15. ‘It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.’ He (the Holy Spirit) works through the human structures or ‘ministries’ created by Jesus. It is a longer and more tiring way, but the results also last longer and become an achievement that will last ‘forever’. Haughey more recently summed it up well in terms of dialectical balance:

Historically, when there has been power without order there has been turmoil, division, and chaos. And where there has been order without power, there has been indifference, conformism, and lifelessness. And there still are. It is estimated that there are 20.800 separate Christian denominations. How many of these came into being because of a failure to keep this dialectic between order and power in balance, would be instructive to know. Power can overwhelm order. And order can suffocate power. Balance in this dialectic is the only way to have a healthy ecclesial community. (1999:7)

### 5.2.5 The contemporary church

These issues have been debated in ecumenical dialogues for quite some time. It seems that it is perfectly possible to have local oversight focused in one ‘bishop’, even a quasi-one ‘primus inter pares’, without being committed to any theory of necessity of succession of that order to validate the authenticity of a particular church. The turning point seems to have been, as to some extent above with baptism, in BEM, the Lima Document. BEM shows both a ‘bottom-up’ and a pneumatological approach to ministry. The community is prior and out of the community God calls some to ordained ministry by the Holy Spirit (Paras.11, 15). The Spirit confers authority in the act of ordination: ‘..this act takes place within a community which accords public recognition to a particular person.’ (cf. the outline above of the transmission of authority). ‘The New Testament does not describe a single pattern of ministry which might serve as a blueprint or continuing norm for all future ministry in the church.’ The statement on the threefold ministry is worth quoting more fully (Paras 22, 23):

Although there is no single New Testament pattern nevertheless the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon may serve today as an expression of the unity we seek and also the means for achieving it. Among these gifts a ministry of episkope is necessary to express and safeguard the unity of the body. Every church needs this ministry of unity in some form in order to be the church of God.....’

At no point in the text of BEM is the essentiality of any theory of Episcopal apostolic succession made dogmatic, yet the threefold pattern is commended. What is also commended is that the Episcopal, presbyteral, and congregational elements of ministry are all important. Historically, oversight may have taken various forms and the Spirit seems to have used them all in varying degrees. The pneumatological emphasis is seen very much in the assertion in para. 33 that ‘ In the history of the Church there have been times when the truth of the Gospel could only be preserved *through prophetic and charismatic leaders.*’ (emphasis mine) and further in para 34.

‘The same Lord who sent the apostles continues to be present in the Church. The Spirit keeps the Church in the apostolic tradition....’

This is a key statement that provides authentication to any church, denomination, or group which has sought faithfulness to the Faith, but for a variety of reasons has not preserved, or never developed, a visible episcopal ministry in a third order sense. The BEM argument moves on to the key phrase that episcopal ministry is a *sign though not a guarantee*, of the continuity and unity of the Church. (Para.38). The argument then turns an interesting corner to state a principle of re-union that has been gaining ground steadily in recent years that as long as the churches remain separated, all lose something of each other. It is not a matter of episcopal churches looking at non-episcopal churches as though they have a missing order of ministry. The Episcopal Church may well lack the distinctive emphasis of the separated church. Hence BEM concludes with a very principled assertion that (Para.54): ‘Openness to each other holds the possibility that the Spirit may well speak to one church through the insights of another.’ (The particular context of this section was the ordination of women).

These themes are taken up in the document, *Apostolicity and Succession*, produced by the Church of England House of Bishops in 1994. In careful language it broadens the concept of succession. (: 21)

‘Although apostolic succession of faithfulness to truth is carried in the *whole community* (emphasis mine), it is also integrally related to the continuity in a God-given ministry of oversight.’ And interestingly goes on: ‘The concept of a sacred tradition of teaching *antedates* (emphasis mine) the concept of an apostolic succession of pastors, but the second was seen to be necessary to safeguard the first’

*Apostolicity and Succession* further opens up the discussion started by BEM on ‘sign but not guarantee’. It sees apostolic continuity in the faith over time as essential to the church’s life but stops short of pinning this solely upon bishops. It then boldly touches



on the thorny issue of ‘unfaithful’ bishops in the course of ecclesiastical history.

(Para.59 :23)

...Whose juridical succession could hardly be faulted. Yet they have not been reckoned to share in the apostolic succession because they have not been seen to share in the tradition of Catholic teaching and the universal communion of the local churches.’

And further on the report again highlights that whilst bishops are a ‘sign of assurance’ to the faithful that the church remains in continuity with the apostles teaching and mission, no individual bishop can provide this assurance on his own. Taken at face value, this report drops strong hints that we can see something of convergence and even congruence in thinking from very different starting points. The balance of charisma and whole community, reminds us of the need to allow charisma (as God given) to operate within the body, but also within the context of the whole body to be tested and discerned. One might thus see in this Anglican document, a Pentecostal/charismatic paradigm.

#### **5.2.6 The Significance of the Porvoo agreement.**

As for baptism, so for the issue of ministry, BEM opened up a new theological landscape within which many subsequent dialogues found a new starting place. One significant fruit of this was the Porvoo agreement (see appendix 5). Porvoo was at the same time both significant and also not such a giant leap forward in that the churches involved were already ‘episcopal’. However, there were some points of note, given the discussion above. The first principle is that of *recognition*. As the independent churches look across at each other, they recognise the authenticity of each others’ members on the basis of baptism. There is also the key recognition of the authenticity of the orders of bishop, priest and deacon in each church. The latter is expressed in the provision to serve by invitation in each other’s churches on an individual basis. In effect one might say that for the particular churches involved here, visible unity has

drawn close and virtually been achieved. But the ‘given’ was that the churches were already ‘episcopal’. They were of the right ‘shape’. The precise words of the Declaration pertaining to episcopacy were:

(vi) we acknowledge that the episcopal office is valued and maintained in all our churches as a visible sign expressing and serving the Church’s unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission and ministry.

Porvoo was a significant step forward on the ecumenical journey. The Declaration itself was a statement of intent offered to the individual churches, but still requiring individual assent from the several churches involved. This has now been given, with the exception of the Church in Denmark. Hence, the way is open for the several churches to declare themselves to be ‘in communion’ with each other. But the episcopal/non-episcopal bridge has significantly yet to be crossed in a major way. Nevertheless, the theological insight of BEM is acknowledged, especially and significantly, that continuity in apostolicity is a several stranded rope, not solely pivoting on a bishop as the vital thread in historical succession.

The Anglican-Orthodox Report, lying downstream of the Porvoo statement, puts it thus:

‘Apostolic succession is best regarded as a succession of communities represented by their bishops, rather than a succession of individuals with power and authority to confer grace apart from their communities....the Anglican–Lutheran Porvoo Common Statement recognised the succession of bishops as a necessary aspect of ecclesial life but insufficient by itself without the succession of local ecclesial communities.’ (2006:63 para 15).

Geoffrey Wainright (1998) analyses the issue of episcopal succession and apostolicity in considering the recent Meissen, Porvoo and, significantly, the Anglican-Methodist International Commission dialogues. He makes an interesting point in regard to the affirmation in Meissen of the priority of the Gospel over any form of ministry and *episkope*. (: 167)

‘...it may be pondered how far, for the sake of the ‘continuity’ (or should one perhaps say the ‘recovery’?) of the Gospel, the German Reformers *accidentally* (as it were)

lost the succession (because there were not always ‘reforming’ bishops available to perform ordinations) and how far the Reformers *deliberately* broke with ‘the existing episcopate’ because of its complicity in the current distortions of the Gospel. What is the theological and practical significance of *unfaithful* bishops in matters of episcopal succession?’ (emphases Wainright)

With this broader approach to theologies of episcopal succession gaining ground, the theological log-jam surrounding episcopacy seems to be loosening. However, for many of the newer independent charismatic churches these matters are largely irrelevant to their perceptions and agendas.

### **5.2.7 Restorationism**

Restorationism may not be thought immediately relevant to the debate about episcopacy in the context of the mainstream historic denominations. However, because of its principled pragmatism and its falling within the context of the impingement of charismatic renewal upon the ecumenical agenda, it yields up some interesting insights. But why did Restorationism have to happen at all?

In the context of discussing an ‘episodic church’, Christopher Hill says (2004:118): ‘Such a view has popular ‘Protestant’ expression in the belief that the Church disappeared from view during many centuries of decay and corruption only to ‘reappear’ with Martin Luther or the Pentecostal movement’. Restorationism is seen as a realisation of the fullness of the church after a steady process of recovering the truth from the depths and darkness of the Middle Ages; the Protestant Reformation is generally seen as the start of the recovery. In his fulsome study of the movement Andrew Walker (1998:14) presents an informative picture of the rise and decline of Restorationism. The charismatic movement within the historic denominations seemed to herald a new dawn for the historic churches. But Walker describes a different perspective for Restorationists. (: 136)

They see the great revivals of classical Pentecostalism as the first phase of restoring the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church, the second, short phase, was

the Charismatic Renewal, when God demonstrated that Holy Ghost power could not be contained within the sect or denomination. The third and final phase, was the restoration of the kingdom of God, which has been absent in its full power since New Testament times. This restoration of the Kingdom is to be the final chapter in the history of the Church in preparation for Christ's bodily return to earth.

Walker thus sets the movement in historical context as an eschatological imperative. He points out the similarity with earlier eschatologically driven sects and groups such as the Catholic Apostolic Church, with its founding influence by Edward Irving, and the early Brethren. The former was committed to the key ministry of 'apostles', whilst the Brethren had a 'commitment to the end of clericalism, and a dislike of any constituted priesthood.' (Walker:237). He notes that several of the modern Restorationist leaders, eg. Terry Virgo, Gerald Coates, Arthur Wallis, and several more, had roots in the Brethren. (:237). If one combines Restorationist 'apostles' as a principle, with Brethren 'come-outism' to establish the true church of born-again believers, then one has two important planks of Restorationism which have a clear historical precedent. (:237). Also mentioned are the groups such as Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christadelphians and Seventh Day Adventists. Walker asks the obvious question: that given their eschatological ethos, why do not Restorationists see themselves as allied to and part of classical Pentecostalism? His answer is that the Restorationists see the classical Pentecostals as having failed to grasp the significance of the spiritual gifts and they have fallen into the error of 'denominationalism' (:136). Even a casual reading of Walker's account of Restorationism cannot fail to impart the sense of a very effectual and successful new movement as far as it went. Yet it also leaves a sense of a certain naivety that the movement has in its self-understanding. Walker (:143) particularly cites this in connection with the movement's approach to church history:

'...one will not find an account of Church history that accords with conventional scholarship. Neither is there anything to cheer the heart of anyone from an Orthodox

or Catholic tradition. Many Protestants too will be unable to identify with the way in which the Church has been presented.

It might seem as if the writers (in the movement's magazines) are unaware of the Greek fathers, and have certainly not read their Kelly.' (Kelly 1977)

According to Walker, Restorationists see 'denominationalism' as not just lifeless branches of a dead church, but as actually sinful. They are part of the apostasy. The restored church will abolish denominations and hence a 'unity' will emerge. (: 144)

Although the Reformation is hailed as the beginning of the recovery, Protestantism is indicted for failing to return to a unified Church. Protestant denominations are viewed as churches perpetuating their own distinctive doctrines and failing to repent of the sin of divisiveness.

There is an obvious blindness here, probably arising out of their ignorance of church history. How, for example, is it possible to have a Protestant Reformation or a Wesleyan Revival without in some real sense risking major division? However, the challenge facing Charismatic Renewal, if it has an ecumenical vocation, is how to impart what is new within the context of the old? This is a much harder task than cutting adrift from older denominations to set up a new structure, but the long term fruit from 'staying in' may be worth far more.

Walker's study brings one almost up to date, and he leaves us with a picture of a movement, not so much in disillusion and failure, but one which has developed and matured, admitted many mistakes and distorted perspectives, and emerged the stronger.

Nick Cuthbert, leader of the Riverside Fellowship in Birmingham, hints at a new day and a new perspective for Restorationism. *Charismatics in Crisis* (1994) is one of a glut of books published during the 1990s 'Decade of Evangelism.' It is primarily concerned with the effectiveness of evangelism in the 1990s. Ecumenically 'The Decade' was marked by a growing interdenominational co-operation, and an opening up to the wider church scene from the Restorationist spectrum, particularly in its

engagement with the Evangelical Alliance. It is interesting what Cuthbert says about local unity (:33)

‘It may well be that our prayer for towns and cities is greatly weakened because we are praying from a base that is impregnated by enemy strongholds due to disunity. When the church in a city or town begins to see itself as ‘one church, many congregations’ and repents of its divisions, it will remove the power base of the enemy within the church and therefore vastly increase its effectiveness.’

Cuthbert links the effectiveness of prayer and evangelism with local unity, but does not give any clues as to the ecclesiastical range over which he sees the required unity stretching. One of the features of modern ‘new’ churches, with a comparatively short history, is that they can be very confident on their doctrinal perceptions, measured from the stand-point of a core Evangelical theology, but show considerable unawareness and unrealism of the amount of work involved in dialogue and co-operation before such unity can start to emerge at the local level. It is the fault of having little history, and the consequent deficit in understanding of the issues that historic denominations are locked into. ‘Repentance for divisions’ can be completed quite quickly in terms of attitudes, but structural and organic visible unity takes a lot longer.

Having sketched a context for the Restorationist movement, it is important to note that the restoration of ‘apostles’ was the key ingredient to the whole enterprise. Walker has (:149):

The way forward to Church unity, Restorationists are convinced, is through the re-establishment of charismatically ordained apostles. Only such an anointed leadership can ensure that Restoration will unite the Church. As far as RI (Bradford stream) and R2 are concerned, denominationalism has had its day.

It is interesting that in Restorationism, ‘apostles’ are linked to unity. There is immediately a high doctrine of the apostle’s office, perceived as the unifier of the restored body of Christ.

Terry Virgo (1981:9-12 in Mather:348) has ‘An apostle is a travelling man, a master builder, able both to break new ground with the Gospel and to bring an objectivity in his appraisal of a local church’s present situation.’

The Bradford House Church defines today’s apostle: ‘An apostle is a big man in spiritual terms. He can see the overall ‘shape’ of a church situation and has authority and wisdom from God to re-direct it, to spot areas of weakness and to appoint leaders...The apostle will be a man of initiative, sparking off new projects and breaking open new ground with the Gospel. He will have the ready following of other leaders and be a constant source of inspiration to them.’ (*Belonging to an Anointed Body* :26 in Mather:348). But with Restorationists needing apostles (as did Edward Irving and the Catholic Apostolics before them) is not the evidence pointing to something significant in this area? How strikingly similar is this claim to that of the Anglo-Catholics and their model of historical succession.

#### **5.2.8 The ministries of Ephesians 4.**

One significant issue that emerges for analysis from Ephesians chapter 4 v11 is the precise relation of the ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, to unity. In Paul’s mind, the fivefold ministry is targeted to serve the building up of the Body of Christ into an organic unity. In the Pentecostal denominations, Restorationist streams and the like, the existence of these five ministries mostly have some acknowledgement. Mather (1980:351) discusses this aspect of house church theology. She quotes Terry Virgo, himself a prominent Restorationist leader, (1981: 9-12) ‘if any of the ‘grace-gifts’ apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers are missing, the church will not reach its intended goal.’ But in the historic denominations the fivefold ministry has been largely melded over centuries into the threefold order of bishop, priest and deacon. It is a key question

therefore, to ask if the archetypal fivefold ministry which Paul seems to see as a 'given' in church order, should still be identifiable in the contemporary church?

Whether the vast majority of 'priests', 'ministers', or 'pastors' who have 'pastoral authority' over congregations, are pastor-teachers in a fivefold ministry sense is not immediately clear. We are back into the charism/institution issue (above). The answer to such a question is likely to lie in the praxis rather than the theory. Do the historic churches, including both Roman Catholics, Anglicans and the multiplicity of Reformation churches, have these fivefold ministries buried underneath some supervening church order which has been accepted as the norm in that denomination? Has the singling out of one 'apostolic' ministry (episcopate) overshadowed the significance of other ministries, which might have continued unnoticed throughout the historical centuries of the church?

Josephine Bax describes an experiment in ministry in the English Diocese of Bath and Wells, where she was a Reader. (her study is in an unpublished paper) She was commissioned by the Board of Mission and Unity of the General Synod to produce a *The Good Wine* (1986), which was came from a year's visiting and research into spiritual renewal in the Church of England. This followed the Synodical debate after the publication of the Charismatic Report (see Introductory chapter). Bax writes of the implementation of 'renewal' in a particular area, and raises exactly this issue from the geographical area of a Church of England Deanery and a Methodist Circuit. The question was put to local congregations, both ordained and lay, whether they could, on closer inspection, begin to identify the fivefold Pauline ministries in their area. Starting from the given-ness of the Anglican vicar the question was asked of him (and he was also asked to answer it for himself) how he identified his gifts and ministry. Did he see himself as a pastor /teacher? Was he really an evangelist? As that



question was answered realistically the discussion then passed on to identifying who had the complementing ministries of teaching etc. Was there a gift of prophecy locally? As this exercise was carried out within the geographical area, *and ignoring the divisions of lay/ordained, male/female, Anglican/Methodist* (emphasis mine) some interesting patterns started to emerge. It was discovered that indeed it was possible to identify a range of ministries, which could be complementary to each other along the lines of the Pauline fivefold pattern. The inference is an obvious one with far reaching consequences: the unity of the Church may be intimately linked in with the unearthing and activation of the God given ministries which are given to the Body of Christ to realise its very unity. So those who would traditionally say that 'bishops' are essential to the unity of the church, may be on the right track, but may not have gone far enough!

It would be an interesting to extend this research exercise. Individual ministers, significant lay leaders, and others with a recognised 'ministry' in a given area could be invited to do this exercise along the lines of gift/ministry discovery, and to see how they dovetail with the gifts and ministries of colleagues. There has always been a tendency to see most of the key spiritual ministries residing in one omni-competent single minister as head of a local congregation. A Church of England minister, for example, is seen, and expected to be pastor, teacher, evangelist if necessary, and so on.

Interestingly, Tugwell (1972:110) says:

It is to be hoped that we shall see a general revival in the church of all the various ministries and offices listed by St.Paul. For too long the priest has had to shoulder the lot, and he is most unlikely to be naturally or supernaturally equipped for it. He needs the prophets and healers...If all these charismatic ministries are revived, this will probably contribute more than anything else to the revival of the true charism of the priesthood, which will be freed from other burdens, to be itself.

The regarding of the traditional threefold order of ministry as though it were ‘set in stone’ for all generations of the church, may well have hidden the uniqueness of individual giftings, which if released into activation could move the church forward significantly in mission and unity. One could also say that the process of individual ministry identification represents a return to a charismatic ecclesiology. Ministries are ‘returned’ to the individuals who have them. Furthermore, it might be discovered that dispersing the several ministries away from an omni-competent single person at the centre, far from weakening his/her authority, ‘the’ pastor may have his local ‘episcopate’ role strengthened. He may be *primus inter pares* within a body of eldership, depending upon the starting polity of the local church. But if there was a spirit of open enquiry to this issue, it may well be discovered that at least initially at the local level the various ministries would begin to dovetail into a team pattern. From that, the pattern could extend outwards and upwards to seeing the whole organism of the Body emerging. This would begin to reaffirm a charismatic shape to ecumenism, which manifested one body with a renewed ‘episcopate’ at all levels.

### **5.2.9 Apostles of Unity**

In the early years of charismatic renewal (1970s) I noticed that charismatic renewal did seem to produce unique and complementary ministries in a variety of people. It appeared that certain people had a ‘ministry of unity’ in certain locations, which did not depend upon their denomination, or ordained/lay status. This was especially true in small towns with a variety of denominational churches. There was an authority in their particular work across the denominations. From subsequent observation over thirty years (1960s-1990s), if pressed to define the term ‘apostle’, I would suggest ‘leadership in a pioneering context’. I would also include in ‘pioneering’ the restoration and renovation of older and earlier work. It includes a unique ‘gifting’

born of vision of God's purposes, a grasping of the shape of what is to come, a sensing of where the Spirit is leading in relation to what already exists. I would posit that the 'apostle' may well combine within his/her person a range of more ordinary leadership gifts; all of which may be needed to implement the task. At this stage of development, to be (say) an expert teacher may not be needed. Neither need such a one be a skilled and sophisticated organiser, but a certain amount of basic organising skill may be necessary. Almost certainly he/she will need to build a team and possibly appoint successors. So perhaps when St. Paul talks of 'first apostles...' (1 Corinthians 12 v 28) does he mean chronologically? The apostle is the first in to a new situation. Such an appointment needs an authority from above to enable the calling to be recognised. This pragmatic picture of apostleship, is primarily functional rather than a calling to office or 'order of ministry'. Reciprocally, the office, with its status, may be necessary to enable things to happen at all. Again the institutional and the charismatic have an essential and subtle relationship to each other. So it might not be out of place to describe the early charismatic leaders of the 1960s, as they sought to implement their new spiritual insights into the traditional denominations as 'apostles'. Stephen Abbott (see chapter 5) believes that there appear to be 'apostles of unity' (:191)

'We need to pay particular attention to anointed men and women who are fulfilling the apostolic ministry of building unity between churches. The ministries of Ephesians chapter 4 are, after all, given so that the church might reach a mature unity in Christ (v 13). In each city, town and community, I believe that there will increasingly be raised up 'apostles of unity' whom God will use to bring Christians closer together.'

Abbott is clear that he is applying this statement across the broadest spectrum. He says, 'We may not like the fact that God is speaking through an Anglican apostle, a Baptist teacher, a Methodist evangelist, a House Church prophet or a Roman Catholic pastor' (:191).

Abbott does not define apostle in this context; but he is surely onto something of vital importance; and probably as an ‘apostle of unity’ himself, his work does offer a coherent picture of the likely way ahead to visible unity. Interestingly, Hollenweger (1997:348) notes that Parham saw himself as an ‘apostle of unity.’ One must not forget also: David du Plessis, and to a certain extent Michael Harper. There are probably many others.

In a recent article, Collins (2006a) refers to an early Roman Catholic ecumenist, Fernand Portal (1855-1926), who made a similar point to Abbott.

‘The union of the Churches cannot, in fact, be achieved except by *real apostles* (emphasis mine), in other words people of faith using spiritual means first of all, prayer which is the source of grace; charity which gives understanding of persons, even those from whom we are separated; humility which leads us to accept our defects and our faults.’

Collins was expounding the importance of pioneering ecumenical friendship. He particularly referred to the friendship between Fernand Portal and Viscount Halifax (1839-1934) which began in Madeira. It led on to friendship with Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines, and the Malines Conversations between Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians.

*Good News* (2006 No.183) highlighted a compelling account of one more ‘apostle of unity’. David Matthews, pastor of the New Harvest Community Church in Brentwood, Essex, who spoke at the 2006 Birmingham Catholic Charismatic Conference, and also at the 2006 Irish National (RC) Conference. He became Spirit-baptised when he was 16 and ordained at 22. He sought to find out ‘what God was doing so that I could join in with it’. The answer he claims to have received from above was: ‘I am baptising Roman Catholics in the Holy Spirit.’ His wife, Mary, has written recently in *Good News* (2007) of the roots of this charismatic ecumenical call

from the Free Methodist Church in Belfast, which as experienced by the early Pentecostals, rejected his initial charismatic experience.

Collecting the evidence together it certainly begins to look as though ‘apostles of unity’ are a species worthy of further investigation. This is not suggesting a new order of ministry, so much as searching for an accurate descriptive label. In the early church, the apostles certainly would be self-evidently ‘apostles of unity’ as the human ministers of the proto-network; and so, *prima facie*, one can see why bishops could be ‘essential for unity’ if they are thought to be their direct descendants. But in a historically divided and fragmented church, there is an element of absurdity in this claim and something more is clearly required. But there surely is truth in principle with the Restorationist’s convictions that apostles are essential to hold the body in unity. Their blind spot was to dismiss all that had preceded them and to begin with an imagined clean sheet. Perhaps providentially, a number of experiments are allowed to happen in church history by the Almighty, as evidence from which we may learn. The many wrong turnings and fruitless journeys of church history looked at on the broader canvas yield profitable insights for the whole body if honestly reflected upon. Meanwhile the Milton Keynes experiment is a significant parallel straw in the ecumenical wind in this regard, with far reaching consequences.

#### **5.2.10 Ecumenical Episcopate in Milton Keynes**

From the viewpoint of the bringing together of older denominations the Milton Keynes experiment is of some significance as an episcopal experiment. Milton Keynes is a new city in central south-east England. Because the majority of its housing was of new construction and required new churches, most of the ecclesiastical parishes were Local Ecumenical Partnerships from their beginnings. This in turn challenged the appropriate denominations to consider how best ‘episcopate’

might be worked out in what was effectively a new scenario. Adventurously, four denominations appointed an 'Ecumenical Moderator' to be the visible ecclesiastical focus for the whole city.<sup>3</sup> Effectively what had been created was an 'ecumenical bishop', though the term was not used, neither was 'apostle of unity'. The leaders of the four denominations authorised the new occupant at his installation by a joint laying on of hands, symbolising the giving and transmitting of authority to the occupant. This act of installation and commissioning was interpreted as giving a 'portion' of authority from each of the denominations to represent them in that particular situation. It was not seen as either removing authority from those who had 'sub-let' a portion of it, nor as consecrating a new bishop in either the Anglican or Roman Catholic orders. (Baker 2006:23). This appointment is of great significance given the discussion above on charism and institution. If an 'apostle of unity' has a charism as a 'freelancer', then the Milton Keynes Moderator is an 'officed' apostle of unity with multi-denominational authority. The first occupant of the post was a Baptist minister, the second was a United Reformed Church Moderator. By vesting 'visible unity' in one person, the ecumenical symbolism is one of the most important icons that the English churches have on their stage. Something similar occurred when the Anglican Bishop of Liverpool and the RC Archbishop of Liverpool regularly and deliberately appeared in public together in the 1980s and 1990s.

Such is the consequence of taking an adventurous step. Office and charism have converged and should be noted as a sign for the future. In a slightly lower key, the North Midlands town of Telford has had an ecumenically appointed Churches Development Officer for many years. A previous occupant was both Anglican Rural

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<sup>3</sup> The four denominations were the Roman Catholic Diocese of Northampton, the Church of England Diocese of Oxford, the United Reformed Church Province and the area Baptist Association. The Church of Christ the Cornerstone, Milton Keynes, the city centre 'Ecumenical Cathedral', includes a full immersion baptistry. See *Called to be One*.(1996 Para.5.29)

Dean, Methodist ‘Recognised and Regarded’, and had a close working relationship with the Roman Catholics.

By contrast, when the idea of an ‘ecumenical bishop’ was first proposed for the West of England town of Swindon, which had a high proportion of LEP parishes, the idea was eventually put into abeyance after protracted discussion, and now appears to have passed into history. Similarly a proposal for an ecumenical Bishop in Cardiff, also failed after much discussion; although a Welsh National Covenant of churches appears to be gaining as a possibility. The idea of a national grouping has been discussed in Scotland in recent years (SCIFU: Scottish Churches Initiative for Unity). But not all the experiments have failed. Those that have worked prove a point.

### **5.2.11 Summary**

In this brief discussion of the issue of episcopacy we may now assert that the dogma of ‘historic episcopal succession’ is no longer the barrier to visible unity it once was within the official ecumenical movement. BEM with its ‘sign but not a guarantee’ approach has opened up the theological landscape. The experiment of multi-denominational ‘episcopate-persons’ has yielded hopeful fruit. The Restorationists have demonstrated a need, as they perceive it, for apostles; and the proposal that ‘apostles of unity’ may be a rediscovered species throughout the churches is an exciting prospect. There are sufficient new strands in thinking and experiential wisdom now available to the churches for them to be woven together into a new episcopal rope, which would then be acceptable to the whole ‘catholic’ church. For ‘episcopate’, the ecumenical goal is within reach.

Sadly by contrast, one can read a collection of essays by experienced and qualified ecumenical scholars such as in *Paths to Unity*, and what is generally noticed is the apparent paucity of any first hand experience, or meaningful contact, with the

Pentecostal/charismatic milieu. The latter need to be encouraged to reflect with more confidence on the theological significance of their own rich experience in relation to official ecumenical issues; and not to sit too lightly to the theological leadership circles of the older denominations. Something of a vision needs to be captured for the possibilities that could occur, if these two worlds could engage.



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **RELATING EXPERIENCE TO SCRIPTURE**

Chapter 3 focused on the effects of charismatic renewal into a denomination, and chapter 5 upon the effects of charismatic renewal into engagement with the theological specifics of baptism and episcopacy. This chapter looks at some of the theological and denominational shifts that have come over individual leaders as a result of their charismatic renewal experiences. The common issue, which surfaces in all of them, is the re-casting of their doctrine of scripture, as it relates to other components of authority. As they struggled to work out a new hermeneutic of scripture, various issues arose such as the place of 'liberal' theology. The theology of Francis Martin's 'hermeneutic of the Spirit' is noted as highly significant.

The second half of the chapter moves on to a fresh exercise in exegesis of some scriptural passages of ecumenical significance, and this leads to a consideration of Peter Hocken's understanding of Messianic Judaism and its wider ecumenical implications. The chapter closes with a personal portrait of Colin Buchanan's charismatic ecumenical theology.

#### **6.1 The theological shift of individuals.**

It seems that charismatic experience makes an individual's inherited theology more fluid. In his spiritual pilgrimage over some years, theological lecturer, Andrew Walker, moved from Elim Pentecostalism to embrace Russian Orthodox spirituality. (Smail, Walker and Wright 1993). The early Anglican leader of renewal, Michael Harper, has moved slowly over from Anglican curate to Orthodox priest. There is a hint of this in *This is the Day* (1979), where he introduces his theme by talking of three sisters: Evangeline, Charisma, and Roma. These symbolise the threefold

coming together of the Evangelicals, Charismatics and Roman Catholics (:13). But he adds a fourth sister to the trio whom he calls 'Orthodoxa'. (:52). Harper's vision thus spans the whole spectrum and is a significant pointer for future study.

In this chapter, certain individuals are the subjects for closer scrutiny: David Pawson was chosen because of his provocative writings (his prophetic comments upon Israel, his views on baptism, the 'male-ness' of church leadership) and my personal discussions with him on baptism. David Watson was a charismatic pioneer and seminally influential Anglican evangelist from the early 1960s in Cambridge, through to a notable ministry in York. Tom Smail, who moved from being a Scottish Presbyterian Minister to an Anglican Rector, was a prominent early leader from the platform at Fountain Trust meetings in the 1960s. Stephen Abbot takes us into the 1980s and he connects with the modern ecumenical movement. David Tomlinson makes an interesting contrast, because of his radical approach and his move *away* from Restorationism. Colin Buchanan seems to have integrated several streams in his personal spirituality. Derek Lance is known through the pages of *Good News*.

These individuals are almost certainly the tip of a much larger iceberg, but as a sample they demonstrate the potential for theological change that charismatic renewal can cause; and hence the ecumenical significance. Buchanan and Abbot I would label as 'apostles of unity'. Hollenweger comments (1997:357): 'the charismatic renewal creates ecumenical facts which might force us theologians to rethink some of our denominational theologies.' The first half of this chapter illustrates that process.

**David Pawson** has been an influential figure in charismatic circles for four decades. His work is strongly individual, born out of what could be described as 'evangelical biblical radicalism.' He was for a number of years a Methodist minister and during 1957, as a chaplain in the Royal Air Force, he became convinced in a new way of the

authority of the Bible. 'It became my judge in all matters of belief and behaviour.' (1993:11). This was a definitive point at which Pawson says he became an evangelical. He later became a Baptist minister, when his biblical radicalism convinced him that believers' baptism was the only valid mode from the New Testament and that he could no longer 'christen' babies. In 1964 Pawson became a charismatic when he found himself praying fluently in a new language for a sick deacon (:11) In his introduction to *Fourth Wave*, Clive Calver describes Pawson as a writer 'with penetrating logic' and warns that both evangelicals and charismatics will be forced to re-examine their assumptions if they are to come together. This is where the significance and relevance of Pawson's *Fouth Wave* theme emerges for the ecumenist. His main concern is to integrate evangelicals and charismatics; particularly exposing the shortcomings of non-charismatic evangelicals on one hand, and charismatics, who seem to have drifted from a scriptural centre on the other. He sees their coming together, as something like a Hegelian dialectic, in which is the solution to the evangelical-charismatic gap is not to be found at some mid-point of balance between them but in a new synthesis *above* them (:12) (emphasis original). Pawson indicates here just that kind of synthesis, which is required in any kind of ecumenical convergence. But the word 'ecumenism' hardly appears in his work, and he would not appear to see institutional unity as a priority.

However, in his prologue (:15) he refers to the important Smith Wigglesworth prophecy of 1947 in which, a week before the latter's death, he predicted two developments in the universal church. The first would be the restoration of the gifts of the Spirit. The second would be a revived emphasis on the Word of God. Wigglesworth added: 'when these two moves of the Spirit combine, we shall see the greatest move the Church of Jesus Christ has ever seen.' (Stormont1989) Pawson

declares that his manuscript was completed before he discovered this prophecy. Consequently he sees his proposal for integrating charismatics and evangelicals as a small fulfilment of it.

In *The Anointing*, (1998:202) RT Kendall makes a similar point on the Word and Spirit coming together, but he does not refer to the 1947 prophecy. A recent article by Pat Collins (2006b) also refers to Du Plessis and the Smith Wigglesworth 1947 prophecy; but the latter sees the beginning of a fulfilment in the Second Vatican Council.

Pawson alludes to the growing number of 'non-evangelical charismatics mainly 'Catholic' but some 'liberal'' (:11) Clive Calver in his introduction to Pawson (:8) also is aware of:

'in excess of six thousand Roman Catholics who would term themselves 'charismatic' or 'evangelical'. And that figure is increasing. Here again serious theological work is needed to reflect the opinions they hold. This book (Fourth Wave) begins that investigation...'

By 1992, when Calver's foreword was written, the Vatican/Pentecostal dialogue was well established, but Calver does not seem to be aware of it. Christian leaders inevitably tend to view the flow of events from the standpoint of the rightness of their own denomination or tradition, which they tend to assume is more faithful to the truth than others. This applies as much to evangelicals and charismatics as Roman Catholics. The process that Pawson advocated was already beginning to happen as he wrote *Fourth Wave*. Andrew Walker (1998:314) comments:

But what was beginning to happen, and this was to continue well into the 1990's, was a networking that was far more inclusive of charismatics and evangelicals than was typical in the immediate past. For a short while—ten years at the most—the Restorationist movement had taken away much of the energy and ecumenical drive from the renewal. By 1989 the flow was going back into the mainstream, carrying much of Restorationism with it, but leaving some segments outside.

It would be interesting to know if Pawson's convictions had any influence in this 'ecumenical' drift back into historic denominations. That was not his prime concern at

a time when many were almost 'a-denominational' in style. It seemed more likely to be a case of Christians, who were maturing and growing up from the quasi-dependency which many Restorationist churches had moulded them into, through to a re-assessing of what the historic denominations still had to offer, without casting away their charismatic experiences. There is a serious point here. At a time when probably a large number of charismatic Christians were drifting from Restorationist pastoral rigorism, who was to guide them and where were they to look? It was a critical time (early 1990s say) when many stood at a frontier of discovery, trying to be loyal to their experiences and yet uneasy with some aspects of Restorationism. It is easy to see also, that under such circumstances, far from returning to parent denominations (the 'ecumenical' direction) the possibilities of re-grouping with like-minded Christians of many different varieties could result in a new fragmentation. Personal pastoral evidence suggested that many individuals found it difficult to settle, after a period in a strong radical church of a restorationist kind. Either they accepted the mould they were in, or they drifted from church to church seeking the 'right' place. Few countenanced a return to an older denomination, even if that church had something of charismatic renewal. Further field study in this area could be useful. (see esp. Tomlinson below)

Pawson is consistently faithful to his basic Reformed conviction of the supremacy of scripture in matters of faith. However, we move to a 'grey area' when he attempts to locate scriptural authority. Pawson acknowledges that the biblical writers were not mere word processors. Their different temperaments and style affect their writings—but this in no way prevents God from saying exactly what he wants to say through them. Neither does Pawson believe that all subsequent translations are infallible (not even the version 'authorised' by King James). 'Above all, it is not to believe that our

interpretations (exegesis) and applications (hermeneutics) carry the same inspiration or authority.' (:77) The position advocated here, is not so different from the starting assumptions of more liberal scholars. (but cf. Francis Martin's 'hermeneutic of the Spirit) The moment one ceases to claim any kind of absoluteness in interpretation, the landscape opens up for meaningful dialogue.

Pawson locates biblical authority in its *original* inspiration (emphasis mine). This is an 'orthodox' view shared across a very wide range of confessions, but attempts to define how are difficult. Pawson recognises the process of the canon of scripture, which is effectively an acknowledgement of the authority of the church. The canonical process is defined in Pawson as selecting 'those writings recognised as communicating the original prophetic and apostolic revelations from God (there were many others not so recognised)' (:77) He later says that 'All scripture was originally prophecy.'(:83) His context is the exercise of correcting abuses of the 'gift' and misuse of prophecy in charismatic meetings. He is at pains to resist the tendency of many charismatics to place 'prophecy' on a par or prior to scripture. Clearly if all scripture was originally 'prophecy' then such prophecies must have carried a higher status, by comparison with the 'word of prophecy' manifestations which are seen in contemporary charismatic services. Pawson's conclusion is that:

'Scripture is therefore an inspired collection of those prophecies, which are definitive for our faith, by which all others are to be judged. The selection is complete. It is neither right nor necessary to add any others to this standard revelation.' (:84)

But does the Bible actually need defending with a particular theory? Pawson's claim of all scripture being originally prophecy is questionable, given the variety of types of literature contained in its corpus. If he is using the term 'prophecy' as a synonym for 'inspired' then it might carry some weight, though it may not actually be necessary in practice to subscribe to that theory. To recognise the 'orthodox' affirmation of the

inspiration of scripture may be all that is required of any Christian. The conviction of the inspiration and authority of scripture may grow in the pragmatism of 'doing' rather than in a prior mental assent to a particular theory. John 7 v 17 has: 'If any man's will is to do his will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God...' (RSV1963) suggests that revelation is a fruit of obedience as one goes, rather than an exercise solely for the mind. The argument thus moves on into the area of the revelatory value of 'experience'. Once again a lengthy quote from Pawson is relevant because it neatly focuses the issues that one has attempted to address in this thesis:

'The problem is an extreme reluctance in non-charismatic evangelicals to consider meeting with non-evangelical charismatics.' (And with obvious relevance to the present thesis he continues): 'The latter are gathered at the opposite end of the ecclesiastical spectrum, comprising some Anglo-Catholics and many, many Roman Catholics.

Evangelicals with a Reformed tradition find it virtually impossible to believe that a genuine move of the Spirit could be taking place among those who still embrace dogmas and duties which they consider to be so contrary to scripture....It must be freely admitted that many charismatics, with their weakness for exalting experience over theology, have been guilty of doctrinal indifference....given all this there is still one vital question for evangelicals: is doctrine the starting-point for Christian fellowship? Should I extend a hand only to those who share my theological position (which implies that I am totally orthodox) or to all those to whom my Lord has given his Spirit (even though they still hold what I would consider heterodox or even heretical views)?' (:73, 74)

Pawson has made an unwitting contribution to ecumenism in blue-printing a new charismatic and evangelical synthesis. It is the very kind of thing that will need to emerge in any future united church. His viewpoint takes in also the breadth of the theological and ecclesiastical spectrum, but his inference is that Roman Catholics, whilst experiencing the spirit 'genuinely' still need to 'adjust' doctrinally. As valuable as Pawson's work is, one is still left with the sense that Pawson (and Calver in the foreword) are largely unaware of some of the serious theological work that has been done on the Catholic side.

## **David Tomlinson**

Contrastingly, going in the reverse direction from Pawson, there has been much interest in the story of David Tomlinson, a former house church ‘apostle’ who wrote of his theological struggle in *The Post-Evangelical* (1995) and has since been ordained as a priest in the Church of England. This is quite significant in that for several years an increasing number of Anglican ordinands have originated from other denominational backgrounds. Such men and women bring a wealth of spiritual experience into a historic denomination, and represent a subtle but significant ecumenical trend.

Tomlinson is from a Brethren background, like several early Restorationist leaders, but has now moved out of the movement, though not the faith. He has set up an experimental church for seekers and ‘post-evangelicals’ in a South London public house, ‘Holy Joes.’ His movement seems primarily to be away from a fundamentalistic view of the inspiration of scripture. It is interesting to compare his exercise with that of David Pawson. Pawson works from a rationale, which preserves the inspiration and authority of the text as originally given. Tomlinson accepts the results of most critical study of the biblical text. His position is not far from that expounded in Peake’s Commentary or the majority of ‘new Evangelicals’, but given his starting point it seems, at least to him, new and alarming. What he recognises as crucial are the assumptions which lie behind the whole post-modernist way of thinking and approaching reality, and it is this which lies behind his movement on from Restorationism. He engages with the radical theologian Don Cupitt and discusses metaphors and the use of religious language. Many could identify with Tomlinson in the inspiration and use of the biblical text, but where he seems to have lost something in his new stance is precisely in the zone one would expect him to be



strong. viz. the pneumatological. Pawson recognises the Spirit as inspirer and interpreter(cf.Martin) and seeks to synthesise word and spirit. Tomlinson sounds a note of scepticism about individuals hearing ‘words from the Lord’ and the impression one gets from his book is that the Holy Spirit has somewhat faded from his personal view. This is surprising given that he was in house church leadership for twenty-five years. There is almost nothing in the book about the revelational value of the Spirit. Tomlinson has moved largely through his own personal growth in theological awareness. Is this saying something about the plateauing and theological dryness of 1990s Restorationism? Nevertheless, he has an interesting comment on ecumenism:

One of the great virtues of the early charismatic movement was its unselfconscious ecumenism. For a while it seemed as though theological and ecclesiastical differences were not the priorities; the focus was on a deeper sense of unity and kinship brought about by the Spirit; and huge psychological barriers and personal prejudices were swept away. Before long there were theological workshops, and the hope was that the whole ecumenical thrust could be re-centred and pushed forward by the renewal. Many things have stood in the way of this....(:27)

Could it have been that Tomlinson sensed the ecumenical instinct in the early days of renewal as its central calling and purpose. Was his hope of ‘re-centring’ ecumenism a grasping of the vision of seeing ecumenism moving onto a pneumatological basis? Did he find Restorationist theology unconvincing ecumenically? What does seem to emerge from his story is the long overdue need for ‘ordinary’ Christians to have a fresh rationale for the inspiration and interpretation of scripture (a packaged version) which does justice to scholarship, inspiration and authority simultaneously.

### **Tom Smail**

But others too were aware early on of the growing theological deficit in the renewal and attempted to fill the gap. Tom Smail in *Charismatic Renewal, the Search for a*

*Theology* (1993), speaks of his personal wrestling with his experience of renewal and his previously honed Barthian theology which could not quite accommodate it.

It would have been easy to get out my sharp Barthian scissors, to cut up into little pieces all that Bennet (see *Nine O Clock in the Morning* 1970) had said and to dismiss it on the grounds of its doctrinal unacceptability and theological inadequacy. What stopped me...Bennet was moving in a dimension of joyful relationship to God and experiences of his presence, power and promises. (1993:14).

Smail is alert to the fact, that the renewal in the Roman Catholic Church has from the beginning attracted to itself some first rate thinkers (he mentions Heribert Muhlen in Germany and Yves Congar in France), who have helped the renewal to understand itself and what God was doing through it. He contrasts this with Anglo-Saxon Protestant circles, where he notes that theologians have generally not concerned themselves with the renewal, with the exceptions of J.V.Taylor and J.D.G. Dunn.

It was mentioned in the introductory chapter, that Polman's 'ecumenical heart collided with his fundamentalistic head and that in the end he failed as an ecumenist.' Smail does not refuse the similar exercise that beckons to many charismatics of rethinking their theology. Referring to his experience of spiritual renewal which he locates spread over a three week period in November 1965 (Smail does not use the term 'spirit-baptism' or 'charismatic'). His description is interesting (: 15)

It was not a change from unbelief to faith, or in the content of what I believed. There were those around at the time who tried to persuade me that what had happened was some kind of evangelical conversion, but to see it in that way would have been to slander the genuine work that God had already done in my life, when he drew me to trust Christ and called me to the ministry of the gospel that had Christ at its centre

Hence Smail is pushed in the direction of a 'second blessing' approach to his experience, but he does not start from any ready made theologies. His determination to work things through radically, produces in the end a fulsome doctrine of the Cross and the Spirit (1993:49). It is interesting, that in the only reference to charismatic renewal in the recent Anglican–Orthodox report, this same point of the linkage with the cross is picked up: 'Contemporary western renewal movements sometimes assign

to the Holy Spirit a role more or less independent from, and perhaps more significant than, that of Christ and his cross. Spiritual gifts and works of power have come to be seen in some Christian communities as the primary business of the Church.' (2006 :29, para.16). Smail is in no doubt of the essentiality of the need to produce a theology that makes sense, rather than avoid the exercise altogether and settle for 'the experience.' 'The understanding could not precede the experience, but it did have to follow it.' (: 21)

Interestingly he notes the transforming effect his renewal had in communicating with teenage groups. The Spirit enabled the overcoming of the gaps of age, status, and temperament in meeting the young. 'He is the reconciling Spirit, the *ecumenical* spirit (emphasis mine), the uniting spirit who takes the peace that Christ's love for the world made on the cross and works it into us, so as to transform our relationships with those around us.' (: 17)

### **Stephen Abbott**

Abbott is an Anglican Clergyman. His book *Join Our Hearts, Becoming one in the Spirit* (1989) describes his liberal, charismatic, and ecumenical pilgrimage in faith. An enthusiast for church choirs, he was reared in an Anglican environment. He encountered an evangelistic style of address in his early teens (which he recognised by hindsight), joined the local Crusaders (interdenominational boys' bible-study group). He claims to have drifted away from this at boarding school, until whilst a student at Cambridge he felt led to go to the Greek Isle of Patmos. Here he entered the Orthodox shrine of the cave of Revelation to read the Gospel of John and pray. In Abbott's own words: 'The light of God's truth flooded into me; looking back, I would say that I was filled with the Holy Spirit.' (:13f)

On returning to Cambridge, he avoided the evangelical Christian Union, said Morning and Evening Prayer privately, attended the chapel diligently and explored a call to ordination. This was approved and interestingly he went straight to New College, Edinburgh to read for a BD. Here Abbott says that his ecclesiastical horizons broadened. He encountered Scottish Presbyterianism, fine preaching from his professors and a taste of Iona. He spent a term at Tübingen University in West Germany, and then a year at Harvard Divinity school completing a Masters in Theology. By this stage Abbott describes himself as having ploughed into ‘the more sceptical and rarified reaches of ‘liberal’ New Testament Theology.’ He then became a Curate in Canterbury Diocese, followed by a return to his Cambridge College (King’s) as Chaplain. Here he re-encountered the evangelicals, but more significantly the charismatic renewal. At this point Abbott says:

‘I realised that Pentecostal phenomena such as ‘tongues’ were occurring in the historic denominational churches. At the same time, I became painfully aware of my own spiritual dryness and emptiness. Then I read two articles by Michael Harper (in of all places the *Church Times*) which really made me sit up...Perhaps after all, this movement of the spirit was something which could renew me personally without causing me to commit intellectual suicide and join the evangelicals. *It also attracted me because it seemed to be operating across all denominational divisions.* (emphasis mine)’ (: 19)

Abbott then describes his subsequent commitment to the charismatic/evangelical constituency, mainly as a result of having received prayer with the laying-on-of hands spoken in tongues (at an Anglican vicarage) and his devotion deepened all round. But of great significance is his subsequent spiritual /theological methodology. Abbott says: ‘Far from being restricted by a more conservative attitude to scripture, I have since found it enormously liberating. I have also found that I can use all the tools of biblical scholarship which I acquired at Edinburgh and Harvard while retaining a more conservative attitude to the text.’ (: 21)

David Winter (1988) notes:

It (charismatic renewal) does not demand a fundamentalist view of the Bible, but those liberals who have shared the charismatic experience have invariably moved towards a more conservative view of the bible. Conversely, some fundamentalists have found that it has freed them from literalism and given them a more dynamic view of revelation.

So Abbott may be added to the growing group of church leaders who have embraced the charismatic renewal experientially without needing to discard their theological critical faculties. Here we note a similarity with others mentioned above such as David Pawson, Tom Smail, Michael Harper, Peter Hocken, and in the early days David Watson. This is not to declare these men identical in all facets. Rather they each developed a personal working theological integrity without denying their charismatic experience. Perhaps one ought to pause and note here that the charismatic encounter (spirit-baptism say) seems to have been an experience of such a significant nature that it has had a determinative and lasting effect at the personal level. The archetypal high-profile example of St. Paul himself exhibits this point. Paul's 'power-encounter', to borrow the language of John Wimber, both on the road to Damascus and within that city through the ministry of Ananias, was decisive and irreversible. Yet Paul's theological faculties remained intact and were probably heightened. At a more mundane level, a significant spiritual encounter seems to be a common factor in those leaders who are developing key ecumenical outlooks from traditionally conservative positions.

After King's Cambridge, Abbott moved to a very interesting ecumenical post in the University of Bristol. The Monica Wills Memorial Chapel was interdenominational by statute and Abbott, as one of the University Chaplaincy team, inherited its oversight as his particular task. Around 100 students formed the congregation and there was a good mix of evangelical teaching and charismatic worship. All went well for a while but after two years (1979) Abbott says that he began to feel dissatisfied

with his work. His main frustration appeared to be the continual throughput of students and the difficulty of building a more stable congregation. A shortage of money led to a decision to stay on as chief pastor but supported by the gifts of the congregation. Consequently Abbott found himself pastoring an independent congregation with a charismatic polity, a unique position for an Anglican priest. The following years furnished Abbott with a rich experience of mission, evangelism, and renewal from his unique position. He was involved with Billy Graham's last visit to England when 'Mission England' came to Bristol and other evangelistic ventures. Abbott was then an important part of the local leadership in the Bristol area as they sought to gather churches together for prayer, community action and evangelism. It is noteworthy that he mentions the importance of the Local Council of Churches as the best forum for building joint ventures of local churches.

What is a major theme under his 'God's blueprint for unity' chapter is a fulsome, almost polemical exposition, of what is required for unity 'within' churches rather than between them. He speaks of a matter that is of common concern to all who have pastoral responsibility. Achieving a measure of unity in matters liturgical, musical, theological, evangelistic or whatever is an achievement between churches, but lack of unity of heart and life between members in a local congregation can render the mission ineffective. Abbott's theology in this matter is grounded in considerable pastoral experience. In his own words:

'We are learning hard lessons about our personal walk with God, repentance, forgiveness, and commitment to one another...My concern for unity, then, arises from the way God has led me. It is practical as well as theoretical. This book will be out-of-date by the time it is published, because God is continually moving his church on, writing new chapters in our experience and understanding.' (: 25,26)

He later makes the statement that Christians who are serious in their discipleship, especially seeking unity with their fellows, need to stop thinking denominationally.

‘Thinking denominationally is quite simply a worldly habit, and God wants to re-educate our thought processes.’ (:191)

Abbott is a little unrealistic here. It is not possible immediately to stop thinking and relating denominationally. It is like asking to switch off history. However, he is really asking for recognition of the total work of the Spirit, which is clearly passing through and over denominational barriers. What then may be required, and there is increasing evidence that this is happening on numerous fronts, is that Christians may *need to operate in two or more networks simultaneously*. (emphasis mine). An individual Christian has to live within the reality of a given denomination with its structures, buildings, pension schemes, accepting its polity, but at the same time sitting to it lightly enough to it to keep aware of and focused on how the Spirit is moving things on contemporaneously. This thought chimes something with Hocken’s approach (see below). It means that no denomination in its present form may regard itself with any sense of finality. Philip Rosato (1978) puts it this way:

No Church itself possesses an absolutely measurable norm of ecclesiastical integrity, since the Spirit is not the exclusive possession of any particular ecclesial community.

This applies as much to the New Restorationist churches as to the ancient historic churches. The mistake of Restorationism was to interpret its God given call as a finality in shape to the extent of dispensing with all else. Similarly, the ancient historic churches as they experience renewal, cannot lie satisfied with any assured status from their own past. What Abbott is feeling towards is not so much a denial of our spiritual identity, but the developing of something analogous to bi-lingualism. We have to have at least two, and maybe more, ways of relating ecclesiastically.

Both Abbott and Buchanan (see below) model personally, and posit a visible church unity, which is not merely an ecclesiastical united nations, but one which is

organically united and in which the Spirit is allowed full play. Raniero Cantalamessa (1991) recalls that for unity to succeed hearts and minds need to be equally prepared:

‘Yet, on its own, the way of official ecumenism will never achieve true Christian unity, and if it were to achieve it, it would only be a short-lived unity. This happened between Catholics and Orthodox brethren at the Council of Florence in 1439. Bishops and theologians sanctioned the re-union of both churches. They signed decrees, they declared the division ended. But minds had not been prepared, bitterness and resentments were still unresolved. The unity remained on paper; actually the situation deteriorated.’

A Charismatic renewal experience, falling into the life story of a theologian, does effect an interesting movement. Where it eventually results in a shift across denominational and/or doctrinal frontiers it has a special significance. Over time one has encountered many similar stories from 'ordinary' Christians, who have felt moved across denominational boundaries as a result of charismatic renewal. Further work is needed to analyse these movements and the traffic has certainly not been all in the same direction. But it does demonstrate the capability of charismatic renewal to effect largish scale migration.

## **6.2 The Spirit as Revelator:**

Germane to this study of the ecumenical nature of charismatic renewal, is the key issue of whether the Spirit is a 'revelator'. Is the Spirit a revealer of 'new truth' or does He merely illuminate 'old truths'. This is the pertinent central question to all theologians and thinkers who also claim to be experientially part of the charismatic renewal. JV Taylor (1981) sees the Spirit as the principle revelator and interpreter:

The Spirit is the great communicator, he is the maker of communion, the giver of awareness, the eye-opener. Almost any time someone says 'I see it now' I would say



there has been a momentary action of the Holy Spirit... It is the seeing which is not observation but encounter.

At this point it seems appropriate to mention St. Paul's conversion. In his case what is often described as his 'conversion' tends to be limited to his initial dramatic encounter outside Damascus. But it is clearly the first stage of his longer spiritual turn around. He receives the Spirit (and his sight) through the hands of Ananias, (Acts 9v17) but it is some years later that the total recasting of his theology takes place. As he says in his Galatian epistle: '...the Gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. (1v11, 12 NIV). Smail stresses this point in his essay by referring to Paul's 'transforming of the mind' (Romans 12v2). Paul refers also of course (Romans 8v27) to the spirit 'searching all things.' There is also notably the Ephesians 3 v 3 reference to 'the mystery made known to me by revelation.' What is being described in Paul looks, even from a cursory reading, exactly the same spirit energised, mind transforming process that we see being described by Smail. In Paul's case one has the theological re-casting *par excellence* of Israel and salvation history. Pawson and Smail both demonstrate how far the individual's theological inheritance from his own denomination and tradition can be reshaped, or become modified by a deeper experience of the Spirit. In the same book as Smail, Andrew Walker describes his theological journey from an Elim church to Eastern Orthodoxy (1993: 46).

The 'renewed theologian' is free to restate his theology, but inevitably must do so within the stream of a tradition, which will judge and authenticate or not his new formulations. Given the need for all churches to re-visit their roots in the ecumenical quest, a position on revelation, experience and theology within a charismatic context would seem to be necessary if there is to be serious ecumenical convergence in the future. (cf. Tugwell on dialectic). It is interesting that Pawson's non-negotiable base

was his radical doctrine of the primacy of scripture, and charismatic renewal for him had to be understood without dislodging that framework.

For Smail it was his Barthian starting position and his commitment to Reformed Calvinism, which set the boundaries and reference assumptions in his re-thinking. It is a reasonable assumption that all thinking Christians will have a theological framework irrespective of whether they can articulate it or not. They may also be unaware of any inner inconsistencies until their framework is brought to dialogue. It is the duty and function of dialogue to bring assumptions to the surface and try them alongside others. Santer, whilst not using the term 'revelation', sees the development of doctrine in the church as the natural outcome of the Spirit inspired community living in continuity with its past. Alongside this Santer sees the need to develop or recover a deeper sense of Christ's presence in the whole church and furthermore sees the sins of schism as a call to the ecumenical task. Santer's picture is of just such a dynamic, a 'pilgrimage' unity in which the Body is moving on together within the presence of Christ. In so many words he seems to be calling for a pentecostal/charismatic centred ecclesiology. (Lecture 'Theology Today', to clergy of Guildford Diocese 1976).

Hocken in his earlier work spells out this crucially important perception as he reflects upon the post 1960s development of Renewal (1986:177):

The co-existence of different visions grounded in conflicting ecclesiologies is at one and the same time a potential threat to the unity of the movement and an invitation to overcome and transcend the divisions inherited from the past. That which has made unity possible between Christians from such a wide range of backgrounds - namely the life and power of the Holy Spirit – must possess the potential to preserve and deepen this unity.

Hocken adds important comments on why he understands the renewal to have not delivered ecumenically after twenty-five years (:177):

The initial leaders of the Charismatic movement in Britain did see the hand of God in their new-found fellowship, though more amongst themselves than between

themselves and the Pentecostals. But they did not seem to have had a clear sense of the imperative to continue in that fellowship and to see that such continuance required common commitment to build on what united them.

He then points a finger by saying that there was no suggestion that they (the pioneers) were determined to seek in common prayer ways to find God's way, beyond the doctrinal and theological oppositions of the past. Hocken's expectation was that alongside the charismatic grace of spirit-baptism experienced across denominational boundaries, there ought also to be a *common grace of understanding* (emphasis mine).

He states it thus (:178):

Whilst there was a genuine communion in the Spirit between the Spirit-baptised, there was not a common understanding of the movement and of its purpose in God's sight. The possibility of a common understanding was dependent on the participants being willing to allow their received theologies, especially their ecclesiologies, to be challenged and expanded in common fidelity to the grace of baptism in the Spirit and in parallel fidelity to the work of God at the heart of each tradition.

He sounds a note that is rarely heard in other authors. The assumption is, that given the grace of baptism in the Spirit, which is self-evidenced by the participants across several denominations, there should also be coupled to it a corresponding recognition that within each tradition there is a genuine work of God. It may have become overlaid and obscured over time but it is nevertheless remains within; and through prayer, reflection and heart searching should be recovered. The task for charismatic renewal is then seen as the recovery of that which was originally of God at the heart of a denomination. By contrast, Restorationism writes off any previous work of God within a denomination and begins with a clean sheet.

The process of rethinking personal theology as exemplified in e.g. Pawson, Smail and Abbott above needs to be commended and carried out on a vaster scale than hitherto. In the early days this was very much a personal exercise by the pioneers, but as numbers multiplied and a growing recognition of renewal took place it ought to have become a *denominational* exercise (emphasis mine).

It is still largely a matter of guess-work why the ecumenical motive for charismatic renewal has been lost from view, and my estimation is that it was not really grasped as a priority in the beginning, from among the more obvious attractions of empowerment for mission and evangelism. Hocken underlines the inevitability of the theological task to be undertaken if charismatic renewal is to bear lasting ecumenical fruit. In the 1960s he notes that renewal brought together older churches with revivalist currents, the historically conscious and the non-historical fundamentalists, liberals and conservatives.

Theologians and biblical scholars were among those baptised in the Spirit in the early years of charismatic renewal. This too gave rise to hope for significant breakthroughs in the areas of biblical exegesis, of theology, of Church history, of an ecumenical vision for the Church...In the 1990s it is impossible to be so optimistic as in the early 1970s. (1994:72).

He adds several examples of how the early ecumenical enthusiasm has abated particularly noting Ireland where in the early days it was the only country whose National Service Committee included both Catholics and Protestants; but this dimension has almost entirely disappeared.

In *Riding the Storm* (Kissell 2000), which is a reflection on his personal experience of leadership in the Charismatic renewal over three decades, Barry Kissell reflects historically on the 'wave' interpretation of charismatic history (2000:120). The ebb and flow of movements has given rise to labelling the Pentecostal revival as the first wave, the charismatic movement as the second and so on. Kissell's prophetic ministry majors on interpretation of visions he has been given. In particular he sees the 'harvest wave' coming; what he calls the 'big one', which will greatly multiply the numbers gathered in to the church. He laments that the charismatic movement failed to deliver this harvest, and judges that this 'harvest wave' is still to come:

Nevertheless, it (the Charismatic wave) did not reach its full potential. God's intended springtime was aborted primarily, I believe, through lack of spiritual leadership...The weaknesses in leadership were, with hindsight, evident early on. The

percentages of vicars and pastors involved were relatively small in comparison to the numbers of lay people involved. (2000:120)

Though he believes the early phases of the movement missed their intended goals, yet in his last chapter he concedes that inevitably some of God's deeper purposes remain hidden. Ironically as part of his convalescence from a tragic surfing accident, he found the Grail community in Pinner; a lay Roman Catholic body based on prayer and service. Here he found *poustinias*, *private* devotional space, where he could wait upon God. Kissell offers some measure of theological reflection upon the route that charismatic renewal has taken. His reflection is very much the fruit of his gift of prophetic interpretation, but nowhere does he mention explicitly an ecumenical motive in renewal. In a recent *Good News* article, Jamus Smith says of waves: 'It seems that the Holy Spirit comes in waves, and it is up to us to be simply faithful and available...somewhere in the 80s and 90s, there suddenly didn't seem to be people coming in this wonderful force we experienced in the 70s and 80s' (2007:10).

### **6.3 A place for the 'Liberal' theologian.**

As Santer reminds us above, the contemporary church lives in continuity with its past. This results in an ongoing dialogue with credal forms and inherited doctrines. A theologian who stands at the frontier of doctrinal thinking has to decide what is negotiable and what must be retained as inviolate. Different thinkers will not agree on these matters and this raises the question of the liberal. It is not easy to define 'liberal' in a theological context. It might mean simply 'outside the doctrinal limits.' Liberalism could be seen as the grey area where 'orthodoxy' crosses over into 'heresy'? John Habgood argues in his anthology *Confessions of a Conservative Liberal* (1988) that openness of mind is demanded by the truth. But given what Hocken is saying above, about the need to open up one's inherited ecclesiologies, it

may well be that the 'liberal', who is also a charismatic in experience, is best placed to carry out the exercise that Habgood advocates. The struggle of the exercise which challenged Smail to reconcile his charismatic experience with a reformed Calvinism, and Pawson with a biblical radicalism, is a necessary one, if the Spirit is to be allowed access, not only to the minds of individuals, but also to the traditional theologies of various denominations. It would seem that a certain degree of 'liberalism' needs to be allowed in creative thinking, both within and between actual denominations if they are to live in continuity with their past and develop together into the future. As well as the role of the theologian, even the 'liberal' theologian, being recognised, at the same time his fresh statements need to be made subject to the scrutiny of an appropriate theological/doctrinal magisterium.

Francis Martin seems to have made a major contribution to theological methodology in this matter, in the area of the relation of biblical hermeneutics and experience. He strongly advocates the recovery of 'a critical hermeneutic of the Spirit' in the understanding of Biblical exegesis. (2001:2). He also points out its obvious relevance to ecumenism: 'Such exegesis has already proved very effective in paving the way for deeper ecumenical efforts at restoring unity once again to the Body of Christ.' (2001:7). (But Martin does not specify anything in particular).

One of the cornerstones in Martin's thinking is that it is possible to have an objective understanding of the text of scripture, which can involve all the skills of contextual history, philology etc. but to remain out of spiritual touch with the realities of which the text is speaking. He sees the crisis as arising '...when the study of the Scriptures moved from the prayerful consideration of pastors in their rooms and the earnest contemplative activity of the monks in their cloisters to the investigative energies of the scholars in the schools.' (2001:7). He sees the Spirit as the only one who can

‘...confer upon us a revelation so that we are able not only to explain the text but also to understand it.’(2001:6). In connecting with the Catholic past, Martin sees the same principle of interpretation rooted in Thomas Aquinas (: 11). ‘Thus it was also necessary that there be those who could interpret what was written down. This also must be done by divine grace, just as the original revelation took place by the grace of God.’ (*Summa contra gentiles* 3, 154). The potential of this approach applied systematically throughout the church is immense. It would not marginalise scholarship, far from it, but it could lift the whole of scripture to a new level of clarity. John Dubbey, a mathematical scientist, has compared the theological methodology of seeking truth with the same process in mathematics and science (1980). His context is that of understanding charismatic renewal and its various claims. He reminds us that since the time of Newton, it is no longer accepted to talk of ‘laws of nature.’ Rather they are convenient working hypotheses rather than everlasting truths. We progress in truth by making a considered guess and testing it out, refining it as inconsistencies with the theory appear. Similarly the Christian way of knowledge is also a ratio-empirical one and it is not surprising that many scientists and mathematicians have held strong Christian beliefs since the essential process of thought is similar. He thus advocates that theology be increasingly seen as an empirical science. It seems to me over the years, that in listening to many charismatic speakers and reading works particularly to do with the area of prophecy, healing and deliverance, that the ratio-empirical method of procedure is a vital but unacknowledged dimension to truth acquisition. Living with provisionality in doctrine, is something which is inevitable, but only reluctantly admitted.

In *Ecumenical Theology and the Elusiveness of Doctrine* (1986), Paul Avis examines this important area of spiritual experience in relation to theology, as part of his

critique of the *Final Report* of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC). Avis' underpinning criticism of the report is that it could well be wrong at the point of methodology. His criticism is that the whole unity discussion within the ARCIC report is grounded upon doctrinal propositions being negotiated and debated, when these are in a sense secondary to the primary grounding of faith *as experience* (emphasis mine). Faith comes first, encounter is primary, and theology and interpretation come afterwards.

Theology is faith seeking understanding of a reality that is given (:30)...Theology should begin with the recognised facts of Christian experience and ask what hypotheses are necessary to explain them. The creeds should be taken as an expression of the experience of the early Church; it follows that we would not express our own experience of God in Christ in the same way today. (:33).

Avis' methodology here is enormously important for the area of charismatic encounter, revelation, and ecumenism. Morton Kelsey chimes with Avis in *Encounter with God* (1972): 'Furthermore, the church has relied on authority and doctrine, on theological understanding about the experiences, instead of trusting the experiences themselves. But this new generation... want experiences of God and the Holy Spirit to verify the theology and dogma.'

Avis continues:

In theology it consists in the first hand (though-mediated) experience or encounter with divine reality that is granted to certain elect mystical or prophetic souls. This, that we rightly call revelatory, may be crystallised in propositions and so become publicly available, thereby offering the rest of us an opportunity of participating in the same gracious reality through our own comparatively impoverished experience...Theological statements, wherein doctrine is articulated, are inescapably existential. (:39)

Avis is here articulating the process of reciprocal judgement. In an ecumenical context, the collective charismatic experience of charismatic renewal is allowed to speak into engagement with the received wisdom and traditions of the historical denominations. Reciprocally there is judgement to be made about charismatic insights from the inherited theological and credal traditions. Avis suggests that



‘certain elect, mystical or prophetic souls’ provide the source data, or are the agents of divine data for the rest of the theologians to work on. One of the axioms of charismatic renewal is that each Christian is an ‘encounterer’ of the divine. Thus applied to charismatics as a whole, the potential size of the source data is vast, compared to a few ‘elect mystical or prophetic souls’. This fact is highly significant for the renewal, doctrinal development and hence unity of the whole Christian church. Francis Martin talks of a circular process when speaking of hermeneutics: ‘...it is a delicate and reciprocal activity by which two faith experiences stimulate, modify, and shed light on one another. The process begins with a faith judgement – I would say a prophetic judgement – regarding contemporary experience.’ (1976:8)

Given these insights, one is ready to look to the dark side of spirituality and ponder for a moment how important a factor the demonic might be in opposing unity among Christians.

#### **6.4 The demonic in congregational division**

Hocken ponders on why early ecumenical enthusiasm waned? If ecumenism is primarily concerned with restoring visible unity to a fragmented church, a fuller look at why fragmentation occurs in the first place is relevant. One perhaps needs to ask the simple question all over again: 'Why do divisions happen in churches?' Hocken gives one clue which ought not to be passed over lightly: '...the spirit of divisiveness is always a sign of the adversary. A history of quarrels and divisions is a warning sign that a movement is not developing in accordance with God's plan. The unity-division rating is then a key indicator as to fidelity-infidelity.' (1994:75).

For Hocken here the adversary is Satan. It seems to be from general observation that charismatic experience draws up spiritual opposition of various kinds, and if unity is judged as in any sense important ecclesiologically, then the breaking of that unity or

its frustration and diversion is an expected tactic of any counter movement. It would of course be erroneous and naive to state that all separating is demonic in origin. However, there is evidence available from parochial experience, which would suggest that one encounters an 'intelligent frustration' working against good motives, especially unity. Deeper research into this area might well reveal that the origins of many independent groups and sects were less than ideal. I personally experienced the setting up of an interdenominational team ministry in Hampshire in the 1980s. Just as it seemed one was embarking on a church unity development in response to the prompting of the Spirit, others stepped back from the whole enterprise believing that it was heading in the direction of an ecumenical apostasy. This illustrates part of an answer to the question raised in the introductory chapter by Cecil Robeck Jnr. concerning unity and division seeming to emanate from the same Spirit.

The experience of David Watson's Anglican Church in York, England, demonstrates an interesting piece of evidence in this context. Watson was one of the Anglican Charismatic pioneers in the 1960's and the account of the remarkable growth of the small church of St. Cuthbert and later St. Michael-le-Belfry was very much held up as an icon in those days. This growth was an interesting validation in evangelistic numerical terms of the importance of charismatic renewal at a time when evangelical scepticism of charismatic styles and theology was strong. However, two important points need to be noted here. Firstly, Watson himself underwent a broadening of his own evangelical theological base when he attended the Guildford Fountain Trust Conference in 1971. Here for the first time Evangelicals and Catholics met together. Watson later described the charismatic movement as:

'God's own sort of ecumenical movement'; and went on, 'I tried to find out what these men really believed about the crucial issues such as the authority of Scripture, justification by faith, the Virgin Mary. I was fearful lest our unity be based only on experience, and not on truth. When we'd cleared away a lot of semantics I could not

see any essential difference between what they believe and what I believed. On basics we were one in Christ though there might be some differences of opinion on secondary issues.’ (Harper 1979:39)

The Guildford experience took Watson courageously to work in student missions in Ireland and later to state boldly that he believed Catholics and Protestants should work more closely together. There is a notably forthright saying of Watson at the 1977 Conference of Anglican Evangelicals at Nottingham, which earned him a lot of criticism: ‘In many ways, the Reformation was one of the greatest tragedies that ever happened to the Church. Martin Luther...never wanted to split the church, simply to reform it. We no doubt glory in the biblical truths that were rediscovered at the Reformation (as I certainly do), but from the Reformation onwards the Body of Christ in the world has been torn from limb to limb into hundreds of separate pieces.’ (See Saunders and Sansom 1992:186.)

Secondly, it is also evidenced in his autobiography *You are my God* (1983:167), that in the heyday of growth in York, there was also a growing group of Christians who were tending towards schism from that congregation and placing themselves under the authority of one of the para-church organisations. It raises an important question of whether many of these para-groupings, which were later to develop into Restorationist churches, were born out of less than clear motives. There seemed to be a collective movement of ‘intelligent frustration’ at work; diverting energy away from the primary work at precisely the time when it needed to be held together cohesively. One factor, which may have had a bearing on the problem, was Watson’s own physical absence from the church. Given what has been said above about ‘apostles of unity’, it could well have been that with the increasing amount of call on Watson’s ministry to lead University Missions in particular, the pastoring of his own congregation may have suffered by his absence. Watson’s ‘apostleship’ may have

been required in closer proximity to the people to hold them in unity. However, Watson mentions a doctrinal matter at its root: a splinter group was preaching a dangerous idea, but with no theological basis, a distinction between the 'logos' and 'rhema' of God (both words being used interchangeably in the New Testament for the word of God). They held that 'logos' referred only to the general word of God in the Scriptures; but that 'rhema' was the prophetic word, God's word for now. Watson pronounced: 'The subtlety is that all this may sound plausible for the Christian who genuinely wants to be obedient to God...The trouble was that the basis on which they felt they had to withdraw was entirely fallacious. Our unity is, quite simply, in Christ.'(:167,168). It seemed that a philological nicety was turned into a theological motivation.

The York incident highlighted the issue of the relation of Word to Spirit, and equally importantly: the implications for leadership within the local church. The charismatic renewal should develop clear notions about pastoral authority within a competent local leadership in these matters. Only by such means can one test whether 'leadings from God' seem genuine, or just an excuse for a group to build a separated religious empire under an alternative authority? Might this be again an example of 'intelligent frustration'? In *Demolishing Strongholds* (2000) David Devenish reflects upon a lot of collected pastoral experience. He lists several focus points and causes of division in the local church. eg: wrong foundations, bitterness, rebellion, division, dominating or manipulative leadership, humanistic teaching, democratic or committee-based leadership, sexual immorality, relationship breakdown. (: 233f). A fuller study is clearly needed in this area, but it is mentioned here as a likely factor in church breakdown, which is not merely solvable by theological methods. The re-

acknowledgement of the demonic reality is another fruit of charismatic renewal, which in its turn needs more theological reflection.

Josephine Bax in *The Good Wine* (1986:32) tells of one group who actually believed that the Spirit had left the Church of England, and hence that was sufficient reason for all renewed Christians to abandon it also. She was told of one annual gathering of the House Churches, where ex-Anglicans were asked to raise a hand (for identification purposes) and then repent of their Anglicanism. Thus a historical difference was hardened into a division, by the use of questionable theological assumptions.

To look backwards at the fragmentation of church history through this lens, would be as revealing as it would be depressing. To gloss over the deeper reasons why divisions occur, especially at the time when they happen, is to risk wasting a huge amount of theological and pastoral time and energy in later years, possibly centuries. A good example would be Methodism separating from the main body of Anglicanism in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The reasons were several and perhaps inevitable at the time (e.g. presbyteral ordination of ministers by Wesley, to name the obvious one). Thankfully the time and energy spent in the last 40 years trying to re-unite Anglicans and Methodists is at last (in 2005) bearing marginal fruit in the form of the latest covenant of 2003. (This is an expression of will, commitment and hope rather than an immediate union scheme in England).

O'Neill mentions, that in considering the future of Catholic Charismatic Renewal, the latter is more likely to follow the track of Methodism separating from the Church of England in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, than the Evangelical 'Clapham Sect' which remained within. His reason is a spiritual-sociological one: 'The broader the spiritual programme of a movement, the more widespread its appeal (particularly if it finds lay

support and the more unorthodox its methods, the greater the likelihood of a separation from the parent church' (1978:7). He contrasts also the Oxford Movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Liturgical Movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> which example the renewal of one dimension of church life and tend to remain within the main stream.' As seen above (Chapter 3) the evidence is that CCR is more likely to remain within. In terms of efficiency, it is better if solutions to incipient divisive issues can be achieved, precisely at the time when they are about to split a group of Christians. Then succeeding generations are spared years of unnecessary labour in achieving reconciliation, which is *ipso facto* the ecumenical task. The earlier the ecumenical diagnosis of the problem, the less time and energy wasted by the whole church. Thus far in this chapter, we have noted that Spirit-Baptism is highly likely to result in considerable theological re-thinking and movement on the part of individual Christian leaders. These individual movements suggest a wider corporate theological reflection by the whole church. Churches ought not shrink from the task but embrace it with a growing confidence. The churches are then better placed methodologically to engage with the newer waves of the Spirit, such as the mid 1990s 'Toronto Blessing' phenomenon. The latter was subject to much scrutiny and discussion in its day but no common mind emerged on that issue; partly because it was not clear as to how a common mind could be reached in practice, in the midst of a range of understandings of authority.

### **6.5 Scriptural authority from the Roman Catholic side.**

Derek Lance (1989) tackles the issue of the magisterium in relation to scripture. The article is written primarily to help the Catholic charismatic layman, who has discovered spiritual renewal, but also encountered the Protestant milieu. He says of

‘sola scriptura’, the Protestant Reformation principle that scripture alone is sufficient to establish all doctrine and rule of life:

Faced with any doctrine or teaching they demand, ‘Do you have a scripture for that?’ Charismatically renewed Catholics will have come to know and love Scripture, but now they are thrown into confusion. They will say, ‘I have learnt from the Catholic Church about, for example, the Immaculate Conception or the Blessed Sacrament and I believe this is an important part of my Christian faith. But now my Charismatic Protestant friend tells me that this is not in the Bible and so I must not believe it. Now I’m not sure if it’s right.’ In short these Catholics are having their beliefs censored by their friend imposing on them their Protestant theological baggage.

Lance labels Protestant theological assertions as ‘baggage’, if they don’t fit neatly into Catholic systematic theology. But for meaningful dialogue to happen, not only do positions have to be owned, there is also a need to, as Francis Martin says: ‘critique our own mindsets’ (2001:15). He continues:

‘...in may be said that 90 per cent of the differences that separate Christians do not come from the text itself but from the uncritical approach we all take because we are attached to a particular way of looking at reality which we have too easily associated with our tradition.’ (:15)

Gelpi’s mindset is revealed a little when he challenges ‘fundamentalism’. Talking of Pentecostal belief being rooted in a fundamentalistic understanding of Acts 2 he says, ‘The abandonment of fundamentalism is, however, no small matter. It demands a major intellectual conversion and the critical re-evaluation of a host of intellectual, moral, and emotional attitudes which the fundamentalist, for a variety of personal reasons, is unwilling to face.’(1975:178). He then balances this by saying that Protestant Pentecostals have no corner on fundamentalism. ‘The manual tradition in Catholic theology...is as fundamentalistic in its presuppositions as many a Protestant....fundamentalism, whether Catholic or Protestant, remains the most serious obstacle too meaningful Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue’. (1975:178). (But things have moved forward since 1975).

Perhaps something of this manual tradition is seen in Lance as he moves on in the same article (1989), to expound how he sees revelation being transmitted from a Catholic point of view:

Now he (Jesus) was still with them in a new way because of the resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit, but what he left *visibly* (Lance's emphasis) on earth was not a book (the New Testament), but a community of followers alive with the Spirit. That is the Church.

This community would transmit the revelation of God to others and that meant preaching just as Jesus had told them to. As Vatican II puts it, 'the Apostles handed on, by the spoken word of their preaching, by the example they gave, by the institutions they established, and by what they themselves had received – whether from the lips of Christ, from his way of life and his works, or whether they had learnt it at the prompting of the Holy Spirit. This is what we call *Tradition* (Lance's emphasis)

It is of course at this point that most Protestants would want to part company with Lance by the principle of 'sola scriptura'. (The Reformation principle attributed to Luther.) But Protestants need also to reflect soberly on the issues of authority, interpretation of scripture, and the role of the Spirit in both.

The Malines Document has (:147f) 'Tradition and Scripture are closely interrelated: both spring from one and the same divine source.' There is an 'osmosis' between scripture and tradition (:147)

It is easy to use 'sola scriptura' as a slogan, but there is an unexamined naivety in the approach of some Protestant charismatics to scripture that needs to be tempered and challenged by dialogue. At first sight, the Church of England, which significantly claims to be both Catholic and Reformed, seems to be 'sola scriptura'; for it has in

Article VI (of the 39 Articles):

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.

However Bicknell, in his commentary on the 39 articles (1950), enlightens this 'via media' position of the Church of England (as understood in the sixteenth century),



pointing out, that the 39 Articles had to defend against the Anabaptists on the one hand, and against Rome on the other.

(I) Certain among the Anabaptists regarded all scripture as unnecessary. An article of 1553 describes them as those ‘who affirm that Holy Scripture is given only to the weak and do boast themselves continually of the Spirit, of whom (they say) they have learnt such things as they teach, although the same be most evidently repugnant to the Holy Scripture’.

These same issues have surfaced once more in modern charismatic renewal: the place of the Spirit in relation to Scripture (for Protestants), the elevation of the Spirit against the Scripture (for ‘radical charismatics’), the question of tradition in relation to Scripture (for Catholics), and the issue of pastoral and theological authority in the church (common to all traditions).

The sixteenth century Reformation, with its consequent fragmentation, demonstrated the phenomenon which has been pointed out above in the introductory chapter, that a movement may be left providentially for a season to ‘persue its own genius’ (Hocken), before it is ready to re-unite with the parental stream. So for example, the Baptists, separated for four and a half centuries from the Catholic mainstream, are likely to remain separate until their founding convictions find a new integration back inside the mainstream. (The BEM dialogue, for example, respects the Baptist conscience). It is as though each separated emphasis needs time to grow confident in its own identity before seeking dialogue leading to re-absorption.

The fourth key issue, the question of who is to say how scripture is to be interpreted, is answered for the nascent Church of England in article XX:

The church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: And yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God’s Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another..

Thus, in the sixteenth century we glimpse the process, evidenced in the Church of England’s 39 Articles, for doctrinal matters to be ‘settled’, there has to be an

interaction between the different components within the matrix of authority: Word, Spirit, Tradition, and Magisterium. (cf. Tugwell). Once this is acknowledged, it requires an acceptance of provisionality in theology under the guidance of the Spirit. Of particular importance is to allow the Spirit access to the whole range of a church's stance on its traditions, doctrines, and spirituality coupled to the willing mindset, that some received traditions and scriptural interpretations could well be in error.

Tetley, writing from the context of the Church of England's contemporary involvement in ecumenical dialogues, has contributed a useful chapter in *Paths to Unity* (2004) on the subject of the use of Scripture in eight ecumenical dialogues. Tetley is a former member of the Anglican – French Protestant dialogue, which produced the Reuilly Common Statement: *Called to Witness and Service*. (The other seven dialogues studied are *Porvoo*, *Gift of Authority*, *Anglican-Lutheran*, *ARCIC Final report*, *Meissen*, *The Fetter Lane Agreement*, *Apostolicity and Succession*.) Whilst all of the participating denominations acknowledge the authority of Scripture and pay far more than lip service to this authority, yet Tetley detects certain inadequacies in the use and honouring of scriptural authority throughout the dialogues. In particular she returns to two key questions raised above: who should interpret scripture and the role of the Spirit in scriptural interpretation.

The role of the Holy Spirit in relation to Scripture would thus seem ripe for exploration in ecumenical exchange. In particular, what might it mean for the interpretative task that the Holy Spirit leads into all truth? And if the spirit still moves where it wills, what might be the implications of this for discerning who could be conveying the messages of scripture in this age and in its manifold cultural expressions? (: 66).

It is precisely here that the contributions of charismatic scholars and theologians, such as Francis Martin, need to be acknowledged in the process of dialogue. They need to be involved both as scholars with their own academic and ecclesiastical professionalism, but also with a spiritual discernment which comes from the Spirit

alone. Such people have the capacity to exert considerable shape to the ecumenical future. Tetley herself probably fits this mould. She is also a strong advocate that more scriptural exegesis should be done ecumenically rather than simply denominationally. This methodological challenge needs to be noted and integrated by such enabling instruments as Churches Together in England.

## **6.6 Revisiting scripture on some issues of ecumenical relevance.**

With the above principles in mind, we now briefly revisit some portions of scripture with ecumenical relevance. It is not intended here to embark on full exegeses of these passages, but merely to make a brief focus and to suggest their significance to some of the issues discussed in this thesis.

### **Acts chapter 15, the Council at Jerusalem**

The Council at Jerusalem was the classic example of the infant church handling incipient division over the question of Gentile conversion and the need for circumcision or not. Obviously the Lukan text is a summary of a much longer and fuller discussion (v7). The magisterium was acknowledged, both by the church in Antioch: 'The church sent them on their way' (v3), and also by the recognition that the Jerusalem apostles and elders were seen as the relevant authority to decide the question. But the Spirit's guidance was invoked in two particular ways: first in Peter's narration: 'God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us.'(v8) Peter's implication is that the giving of the Spirit was the seal of approval. It was manifest to these Gentiles before they could be circumcised. No further questions were needed. Secondly, the Spirit's guiding and approving presence in the assembly was evidenced in the letter to the Church in Antioch: 'It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us' (v28). Hence by the time of the Council in Jerusalem the young church had sufficient experience of

decision making in the Spirit, and the end result was unanimity in heart and mind. This laid the basis for wider unity, as the mission expanded.

Edward O' Connor (Chapter 3) talked of God beginning with a glorious Pentecost, in which he alone does almost everything single-handedly, but when this has been established he turns the work over to men, and lets them carry it forward by their own activities, still helping and supporting them, more invisibly, but still under the Holy Spirit's guidance. The Jerusalem Council is an example of a major decision under the Spirit but with considerable latitude for the minds of the apostles. One only has to ponder the split, which separated off Methodism from the Church of England. One could imagine the different outcome if both parties could have sat under the guidance of the Spirit around the same table, with a humility and flexibility of heart and mind on the part of the 'magisterium'. There are countless other pieces of ecclesiastical fragmentation around the globe which ought never to have been. Acts 15 thus points to an essentially pneumatological basis of unity.

**John 17, Ephesians 2 & 4, and I Corinthians 3, & 12-14** are the more common texts used by ecumenical advocates. The John 17 v 21 passage is so well known, at least in theory, for it to have become the prime ecumenical proof text. The visible disunity of the Christian church is not only unfortunate and wasteful at a logistical level, but in a profound way it is a denial of the faith that is proclaimed in Word and Sacrament.

This theme is spelt out in depth in St. Paul, notably in Ephesians. Compressed into one sentence he has in chapter 1 v 10: 'to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.' This is the mystery hidden for long ages and now revealed. Ephesians 2 posits Jewish/Gentile unity in Christ as the chief cornerstone. Chapter 4 v 3 is explicit that unity is 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond

of peace.’ In the same chapter Paul links the actualising of this unity with the ministry gifts. (see discussion above in chapter 4 on ‘apostles of unity’). 1 Corinthians chapter 3 is again a well-known ‘division’ passage in terms of local churches clustered around loyalty to different leaders, and consequently living on the brink of continuous fragmentation. Paul counters this by pointing to Christ as the foundation of the church and indicating the apostles e.g. Apollos and himself as servants of Christ, sharing in the building. It is 1 Corinthians chapters 12–14, which sets out the unity in dynamic, of the spiritual gifts in operation in the local church. This much may be clear in the New Testament, but present day church experience falls somewhat short of it in the praxis.

### **Ezekiel 36 & 37 :**

David Watson continued his analysis of the division he experienced at his York church as follows:

Significantly, when the Spirit came, in Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones, he did not blow the bones away and start with something entirely new, as he could easily have done. He worked on those dry and dusty bones, bringing them together, clothing them with flesh, and instilling new life into them. This is what I see God is doing with all the denominations throughout the world today. There is often an unholy impatience when Christians divide, often on some minor issue, to do their own thing. It is worth reflecting that Jesus continued worshipping in the synagogue and Temple for some thirty years, patiently bearing with its spiritual deadness, before his incredible and brief ministry took place. (1983:170)

Watson identifies the primary purpose of the current movement of the Spirit is the bringing of spiritual life to existing denominations; left as it were for dead, like dry bones. But his exegesis of this Ezekiel 37 passage makes no reference to the resurrection and restoration of Israel, which is taken by many exegetes as the primary meaning of the passage. The dry bones coming together, symbolise a literal bringing back of Israel to the original land, and with a hint of personal bodily resurrection after death. Watson's evangelical theology and exegesis would have been formed before the time when 'replacement theology' became an issue among renewed Christians.

'Replacement theology' briefly states that God's covenants with Israel ceased at Christ's Passion. The Jews now became in status no different from any other nation on earth. The promises due to Israel found their fulfilment in the Christian church and hence a 'replacement' has taken place.

Watson's point about Christ worshipping in the synagogue is a strong one and is obviously meant to buttress staying within the historic Church of England, for those who are tempted to abandon it. Nevertheless, in many of Watson's early evangelistic addresses (particularly in university missions) he frequently criticised the deadness of the institutional church as a barrier to faith for many people who were seeking it. But he went on to say that the only justifiable separation from it would be through persecution (he mentions Wesley and Whitefield in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century) or when the institutional church 'has apostasised by denying the most fundamental tenets of the Christian faith. All other divisions are wrong and sinful and grieve the Holy Spirit of God'(:170).

The vision of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37 is well known. But the resurrection of Israel theme is buttressed both by Ezekiel 36 and also significantly by the two sticks vision, which follows the dry bones in Ezekiel 37. In Ezekiel 36 there is a comprehensive picture painted of Israel being brought back together on their original land, into an organic whole, from fragmentation among the nations. This return is also to include a spiritual cleansing and regeneration in which the Spirit will play a key part.

For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. You will live in the land I gave to your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. (Ezekiel 36 v 24-28 New International Version.)

This is familiar scripture to many because of its parts, but taken as a whole the sense is that Israel's intended destiny is geographical possession of its territory plus spiritual cleansing and holiness. Some exegetes might see baptism pre-figured here in the water of cleansing. Anglicans have this passage in the rite of Confirmation. But the full force of the picture, which Ezekiel sees through the mist, has to wait to take on a fuller expository shape in Romans 9-11.

Meanwhile in Ezekiel 37 v 15-28, following the dry bones vision, there is the vision of the joined up sticks. The prophetic interpretation is that the two sticks represent the Northern Kingdom (10 tribes) and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The prophetic symbolism sees the eventual coming together on their original land of all the tribes under united leadership (v22:), never again to be divided. One cannot help but note here that although the mysterious identity of the 'lost ten tribes' has not revealed a solution after two and a half millenia, prophetically, they are not lost from the view of Ezekiel.

In *Fourth Wave*, David Pawson quotes this passage of Ezekiel's two sticks as support for his own picture of charismatic and evangelical coming together. (1993:132). But it is interesting that he uses the passage as an analogy and stops short of any further exposition along the lines of the lost ten tribes.

The prophet is saying something here about the scenario of God's purposes not finally being frustrated. God appears somehow relentless in his goal fulfilment for his covenant people. Ez.37 v 24 has: 'my servant David will be King over them and they will all have one shepherd.'(NIV). The inference is that God can restore the covenant people from far-reaching sinfulness, from idolatry, from rebellion and profanation of his name. He can return the tribes from exile and restore the nation to

its original calling. Not only that, but there is to be the spiritual fulfilment also enabled by the Spirit.

What is touched on here is relevant to the search for a fuller biblical ecumenical theology. If God can restore and reunite an apostate Israel (or just the Jews?) is he also capable of re-uniting a divided Christian church? Should all denominational dry bones be prophesied over or should some be left as symbols of spiritual death? Is there a level of apostasy, either in moral life and/or doctrine, beyond which the situation cannot be recovered?

Any attempted answer is bound to engage with the question of divine sovereignty and human free will. Isaiah 46 v 11 hints at this paradox: 'What I have, that will I bring about, what I have planned that will I do.' (see also Isaiah 55v10, and 22v22).

So if there are prophecies to be fulfilled, must the principle of grace working despite human division, eventually triumph against human resistance? If so, does this imply an eventual universalism, and by inference: can a fragmented church still be used even in its broken and impaired state? The Book of Revelation as a whole suggests that universalism is not a realistic hope. There must always remain the possibility that men will reject God from their own free choice. The general flow of Christian theology down the centuries also rejects an ultimate universalism. But as far as visible unity is concerned, and especially between Jew and Gentile, scripture is much more hopeful. The string of questions here is an indication that there remain several open-ended issues.

**Romans 9-11** is probably one of the best known pieces of theological writing in this context: Paul opens the section with a clear statement of the problem and his anguished reaction to it. Israel has the sonship, the glory, the law, the covenants, the temple worship, and (significantly) the promises. (Jesus himself mentioned that



'salvation is from the Jews' John 4v22). They have the human ancestry of Christ. Therefore how could they have rejected their Messiah? The next stage in his argument is to say that God's word has not failed because 'not all who are descended from Israel are Israel' (v 6. It is also significant that Paul uses 'Israel' in the Greek text and hasn't narrowed it down to 'Jew'). Is Paul immediately into remnant theology? Part of the rationale of Restorationism was: 'new wine, new wineskins.' The dead branches of denominationalism are left in history as archaeological remains. But Paul doesn't quite take this road in Romans 9. Instead, he cites the Isaac line of blessing and the continuation of the line of promise through Jacob. His argument centres on God's sovereignty. God has mercy on whom He chooses and also hardens whom he wants to (v18). Paul then employs the sovereignty argument as God's justification for including Gentiles with Jews (he mentions Jews first in v.24.). But in quoting Isaiah 10 v 22. he makes an apologia, that only a remnant of Israel will be saved. This paves the way for Paul to relate the two ways of righteousness, by the law and by faith, which he has expounded at length in the first eight chapters of the Epistle. In quoting Isaiah 10v 22 concerning the stone in Zion that 'causes men to stumble' Paul in effect says that God had it all planned and saw it all coming. Paul effectively suggests a mystery factor in the outworking of sovereignty. Chapter 11 addresses the question that God could have historically rejected his people in the sense of final abandonment, but the inference is that he hasn't. Paul sees the temporary hardening of the Jews as the opportunity for the Gentiles to share in the Jews' spiritual riches and in the analogy of the ingrafted branches to the tree (C11v 16-24) urges against any wrongly based Gentile pride. In v25 Paul, comes to the crescendo of his argument with the bold statement that the hardness of Israel is only temporary, until 'the full number of the Gentiles has come in.' In v 28 he posits what

may well be both the pivot of his thought that: 'for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable'. God's plans and intentions cannot be withdrawn, but how does this relate to the overall salvation of the whole of Israel? It is not easy to understand what he is saying in v30-32, but what is clear, is that his doxology which closes the section seems to betray some wonderful revelation, inaccessible for those of us who have not had it. Did Paul has some inner assurance that all Israel *will* (emphasis mine) be saved in the fullest spiritual sense as Christians might understand it?

Paul mainly quotes from Isaiah, and there is a strange silence from Ezekiel whose prophecies he most certainly knew. What cannot be found in Romans 9-11 is any anti-Semitic material, or any firm ground for 'replacement theology'. The conclusion therefore from Paul, is that the Church, combining both Jewish and Gentile believers, is the first fulfilment fruits of the Old Testament prophecies, the pneumatological community. But even the unbelieving Jews would one day in some mysterious way be brought to faith in Jesus as Messiah.

Hocken (1994) writes on 'The pivotal role of Israel', and spends time in reference to Romans 9-11. He also expounds the biblical model of the faithful remnant in relation to the rump nominal body, applying it to renewal and parent bodies.

In this connection, Pawson advances a plausible thesis why Paul wrote the Roman epistle at all. Under the Emperor Claudius all Jews were expelled from Rome. (Among those expelled were Aquila and Priscilla who met up with Paul in Corinth Acts 18 v 2). Thus the church in Rome became wholly Gentile in leadership and membership. When Claudius died in AD 54 and was succeeded by Nero, the latter's early years were marked by toleration and the Jews were allowed to return.

The former (Gentiles) were claiming, with some arrogance, that it was inevitable that Gentile's should take over from Jews, who had as a race rejected Christ (this was the first example of 'replacement' theology: the teaching that Israel is finished because her place has been taken by the church as the 'new Israel')

...At worst, the church could be destroyed; at best it would be divided into two 'denominations', which could spread throughout the empire. Yet Paul was not free to visit them straight away...But he could and did write a letter, just months after the Jewish return to Rome (which cannot be a co-incidence). (1993:142,143).

The Jewish/Gentile unity in the Roman Christian congregation held. There is an obvious contemporary significance in this Jewish/Gentile 'visible unity', in that the great 1054AD Schism of East-West, the Protestant Reformation and subsequent fragmentation, highlight the historical ruptures; and consequently the importance of the ecumenical task.

In this context it is interesting to note the remarks in Time Magazine by James Carroll (2005) concerning Pope John Paul II:

‘...the shift began with Vatican II. The 1965 declaration *Nostra Aetate* famously renounced the Gospel charge that the Jews are guilty of the murder of Jesus.... Healing the ancient breach with Judaism became the most important part of his pontificate. In reverencing the Western Wall in Jerusalem in 2000, the Pope reversed the ancient Christian denigration of the Temple of Israel, renouncing forever the idea that because Jesus is the 'New Temple', Judaism is 'replaced' by Christianity.’

## **6.7 Hocken's exegesis on Messianic Judaism**

Dunn remarked at the 1997 Swanwick Conference of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, that the Judaism-Christian faultline rather than the various Christian sub-divisions was the fundamental gap among God's people.

In the Malines Document (:114) reference is made to a major ecumenical charismatic gathering in July 1977 at Kansas City. 50,000 of which half were Catholics: ‘There, Catholics, Baptists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Mennonites, Pentecostals, Presbyterians, United Methodists, Messianic Jews and a non-denominational Protestant Group, greeted one another with warmth and joy and prayed together’ (:114).

Whilst Tugwell advocates full integration of renewal within Catholicism, Hocken (1994) goes further and advocates a fully integrated continuity of Messianic Judaism

and the Church. This underscores the Pauline doctrine of re-integration of Gentile Christianity with Messianic Judaism, very much along the lines of the olive tree analogy in Romans 11. He sees Israel as the bearer of the promise, whereas the Church is both the fruit and witness to initial fulfilment and to remaining promise. (:136). Hocken expects that the Spirit will lessen the gap between the churches and Messianic Judaism as the divided Gentile churches re-seek their unity.

The Messianic Jews are instinctively liturgical. They naturally adopt a form of biblical fidelity which is not afraid of ritual and outward forms. It is therefore of vital importance for the proper contribution of Messianic Judaism to Christian Unity that Gentile Christians whether Catholic or Protestant, give them the space to develop in fidelity to the Spirit and to make their unique contribution to Catholic -Protestant reconciliation. (1994:160)

The apogee point of the 'Parousia' will be a key point in history, for it will manifest unmistakably the bond between Israel and Church. He argues that a large measure of Christian unity is implied and will be achieved before the Parousia. The effective evangelisation of the world requires the witness of unity among Christians (John17: 20-21):

...a more fundamental reason flows from the nature of the Church as the 'one new man' formed from Jew and Gentile. A de-judaized Church has a weakened knowledge of Jesus as Messiah and Lord. The conversion of the Jews and the reunion of Jew and Gentile in the one body will have enormous effects on our grasp of Scripture, and our understanding of the Messiah and Lord who is its centre. (: 166)

If Hocken is right here, what might this mean in practice? Could it herald a re-integration of synagogue and church, with Jew and Gentile sitting to worship a common Lord together?

In Zechariah (14v16f) the prophet depicts a future age, when post the military attack on Jerusalem by multiple Gentile nations, the survivors from the various nations will have enjoined upon them the duty of worshipping the Almighty in Jerusalem by participating in the annual Feast of Tabernacles. There is to be a strong element of penitential pilgrimage. Failure to carry this out on the part of any nation will result in the judgement of that nation by having no rain. (V17). There is a hint here, however

one interprets such passages, that the focus of attention of the Gentile nations in the new age will be redirected towards Jerusalem and that whatever their own religious preference, they will be enjoined to share in the worship of the ancient covenant people. St. Paul could have had these prophecies in mind when he used the wild and natural olive branches analogy in Romans 11. This line of thinking is strengthened by noting the well known prophecy in Isaiah 2 v 2-4 of the mountain of the Lord's temple being established as chief among the mountains; it is to be raised up above the hills and all nations will stream to it. It depicts the Messianic age of Jerusalem being the source of the word of the Lord (v3) and judgement and justice will be effected out from the Lord who will settle disputes for many peoples and nations. It will also mark the end of warfare as a means of so doing (v4). Jerusalem is prophetically re-centred among the nations, as the hope of eventual global peace. What conclusions might one draw for the visible unity of the church?

### **6.8 The Visibility of the Church**

Given Paul's olive branch grafting analogy in Romans 11, one might assume that St. Paul saw combined congregations of Jewish and Gentile believers as a norm. In the apostolic age 'Christian disunity' was not an immediate issue. The church was palpably one at least in an organic sense, despite the various tensions, which were clear from Corinthians and Acts of the Apostles. However, beyond the 4<sup>th</sup> century Constantinian church-state nexus (the birth of the concept of Christendom) the phenomenon of mass baptism in infancy gives rise to what has been called 'nominal or notional Christianity.' Paralleling Paul's assertion in Romans 9 v 6 that not all who are descended from Israel are Israel, so it has been a working assumption, particularly since the Reformation, that not all who call themselves Christians are Christians. Thus a more strident Protestant position tends to equate 'invisibility' with

purity and authenticity. Evangelicals are more given than Catholics, to seeing the true church as 'invisible', for the principle reason that they see true Christians as the product of the inward re-birth by the Holy Spirit (following John 3 v 5). If there is no guarantee that baptism conveys regeneration, then only 'true conversion' counts. There is thus a mismatch between the 'true' Christians and those who claim to be so through baptism alone. The ecclesiological consequence is that if baptism marks the boundary of the 'visible' church, then the true church will be out of congruity with the 'nominal' church, and the ecumenical task is skewed or thrown into irrelevance. In support of this view there are undoubtedly large numbers of baptised (mainly in infancy, but not exclusively) who do not appear to proceed to growth in faith or visibly active in church membership (see Appendix 8) Yet, to posit an 'invisible' church is illogical.

It is logical that if the Holy Spirit alone grants the spiritual life which defines a Christian, then sooner or later the effects of that life must become visible. Jesus mentions in Matthew 7 v 15f, about the tree and its fruit: 'thus by their fruits you will recognise them' (v 20). The subject of discussion here is not Christians in general, but prophets in particular, especially the false variety. The inference here is twofold: it is not simply a matter of testifying to personal faith, but that there should be visible evidence of the life of the Holy Spirit in the believer. Common sense alone suggests that all earthbound churches, even the most apparently 'pure' are composed of real visible people making audible claims to faith. Only in the local context over time, can that faith be established as authentic. This was a matter of concern to the disciples in Mark 9 v 38 and following, where they observed a man who was driving out demons in Christ's name. This is an incident heavy with ecumenical implications. The Lord's wisdom was to 'let him be' for the moment. The parable of the wheat and the

tares (Matthew 13 v 24-29) suggests that there may always be a melange of the genuine and the deceptive in the visible church, and that attempts to 'purify' should be resisted, lest, according to the parable, the genuine is accidentally thrown out in the process. Article XXVI of the Church of England (on 'unworthy' ministers) affirms this view in its statement that 'in the visible church the evil be ever mingled with the good.'

The Apocalypse includes the addresses to the seven churches of Asia Minor. The gist of the commendations and warnings certainly carries the notion that appearances can be deceptive e.g. the Sardis church (3v1) 'you have a reputation of being alive but you are dead.' Verse 9 hints at spiritual deception: 'I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though are not, but are liars.' The removal of the lampstand (2v5) of the Church at Ephesus indicates symbolically a soon coming judgement.

The new Porvoo ecumenical phraseology in connection with episcopacy ('a sign but not a guarantee') is a wise choice of words. It ought to be applied, not only to the case of episcopacy, but also in the matter of baptism, where however we reconstruct our theology, some objectivity must attach to the sacrament. It also should apply in the matter of the visible and invisible church. Both theory and pragmatism indicate that attempts to decipher and define a true and authentic church from behind the 'façade' of an official and visible one are probably doomed from the start. Perhaps the final word is to be found in the Malines Document 2 where quoting *Lumen Gentium*, Art. 8 one reads:

'... the society furnished with hierarchical agencies and the Mystical Body of Christ are not to be considered as two realities, nor are the visible assembly and the spiritual community nor the earthly Church and the church enriched with heavenly things. Rather they form one interlocked reality, which is comprised of a divine and a human element. (:103)

Given this context I pass to a key principle in Hocken's thought of 'God not leaving the starting point behind.' Hocken gathers up familiar themes and weaves them into an extremely important signpost for the ecumenical movement:

'God moves from the earthly to the heavenly, from the physical-material to the spiritual. In this process, God builds each new stage on those that he had previously established. God never leaves the starting point behind.' (:152).

So for example, in the book of Genesis, the physical creation comes first and followed by the climax: the creation of man and woman 'in his own image.' He sees also that in starting with Abraham, God, over two thousand years, acts to shape a people for his own, elevating the faithful children of Abraham to be the human ancestry of the Christ (Romans 9 v 4-5). He cites Paul in the context of the resurrection of the body. 'It is sown a physical body it is raised a spiritual body.' (1 Corinthians 15 v 44) i.e. the physical precedes the spiritual, and looking ahead: the creation is pointing towards its fulfilment in a new heaven and a new earth where the spiritual will totally suffuse and transform the physical. In Christ the process of suffusion and transformation reaches its climax in the Incarnation, in which the eternal Word literally becomes flesh. The idea of not leaving the starting point behind suggests that 'replacement theology' is ruled out; and by implication, churches and denominations are not necessarily discarded into history as irrelevant baggage. They represent the historical learning curve for that group. Hence, we might contextualise charismatic renewal as the spiritual, suffusing the largely 'physical' denomination.

In the economy of God's time and providence, separating movements seem to have a time limited purpose in focusing neglected aspects of faith, eg. Luther and Justification by Faith. This demonstrates the fact that God's activity is not entirely suspended in a separated church. So the Baptist movement is likely to retain its



separate identity until such time as adult/believers' baptism becomes a norm in the older denominations. The Pentecostal movement exhibited the baptism of the Spirit and the spiritual gifts. Specific 'graces' (to borrow a catholic usage) may operate for a while separately from the main bodies. But when the same graces have been rediscovered, and acknowledged as needed in the parent body, then the time may come for the re-absorption of the vehicle that bore them in isolation, back into the mainstream. Thus the charismatic movement might be seen as an injector of rediscovered graces, lifting the denominations onto a higher spiritual plane. Hocken again (:156)

Protestant Christianity represents a protest for truth (the Word) against a debased Christianity, in which outward forms were no longer experienced as the bearers of Gospel truth. But as the history of Protestantism demonstrates, organic unity is impossible on the basis of the written word alone, apart from reconciliation with the historic roots from which the faith has come ...Pentecostalism represents a protest for Spirit against a powerless and largely cerebral Protestantism...but, the history of the Pentecostal movement illustrates that Spirit and Word need something more to produce the unity of the body of Christ. That more is the original body and the original flesh: the ancient Churches of East and West, and most importantly, Israel.

Thus Hocken's vision sets out the broadest context for the ecumenical imperative. It is a view, which stands on a strong biblical foundation and offers a plausible understanding of church history. My own view of the 'transfiguration motif' offers a parallel view of church history to that of Hocken.

## **6.9 The transfiguration motif**

In charismatic renewal, one is dealing with a phenomenon that is self evidently trans-denominational from the start. But one reason why it somehow fails to follow through quickly to its initial visionary goal (in this case the ecumenical one) may be what could be called the 'transfiguration' effect. In the Gospel accounts of the transfiguration, Peter, James and John receive a privileged glimpse of the *doxa* that is the Lord's. The reality of the glory is veiled most of the time, but exposed for a brief

period to those who are ready to see. The coming down from the mountain and the solemn procession to Calvary, do not erase the *doxa*, they merely veil it again. The painful suffering of the Passion precedes chronologically the later glory to be revealed. St. Paul sees this in terms of the groaning of childbirth and being saved in hope. (Romans 8 v 18-26). The future fulfilment must wait for the *kairos*, the right time. Human logic and pragmatism, born out of spiritual desire might wish to move straight from the Mount of Transfiguration to the eschatological *doxa*. But the divine schema manifests the glory and then withdraws it from view. The faithful must follow in faith, looking forward to a later fulfilment. So drawing on the transfiguration motif, it may well be that charismatic renewal is a foretaste of the ultimate ecumenical reality, which is ever present in the Spirit, but awaiting much institutional groundwork and ecumenical pedestrianism, before it can be realised in the far greater glory of a church which has manifestly married the pneumatological and the institutional in a creative balance. Periodically the initial vision gets lost and needs to be re-glimpsed. Perhaps this is why the Alpha course has appeared as a 'sign' for a season. The transfiguration effect of the glimpse followed by the apparent recession may also go some way to explaining the 'wave' theory, i.e. the ebb and flow of renewal and revival movements. The end is glimpsed in the initial revelation. It is not some new reality waiting to be created, for it already exists. It was demonstrated supremely at Pentecost itself: the glossolalia and the global mission are there from the start, but the real glimpse must submerge into the incarnational human realities of the Acts of the Apostles. It was there in ecumenical promise of Azusa Street Pentecostalism, before it melded into the first half-century of Pentecostal history. It re-surfaced as the charismatic movement, when again the glimpse of the Spirit's ultimate was seen through the institutional frameworks. In personal

spirituality, it helps to explain Pentecost as an ongoing event and of the church being shaped towards its future. (Sullivan 1980:145)

‘If the Pentecostal theme of Acts is invoked and repeated, it is not because neo-Pentecostalism is trying to revive and repeat a pristine, golden age of the Church...Neo-Pentecostalism is a response of faith in Pentecost as an ongoing event of Christian life and mission...In fact it is more about the future, because when we study the New Testament ‘we should always have in mind...the futuristic aspect of the Church.’ since, ‘it does not yet appear what the church shall be.’...for we know that the Church ‘anticipates in hope the life of the age to come.’ (Ramsey 1977:87)

Every revival (or whatever equivalent name one cares to use) brings the glimpse incarnated. St. Paul may have had this in mind when using the phrase ‘through a glass darkly.’ (1 Cor. 13). Hence there will always be a need for the charismatic to engage with the institutional if the church is to manifest the full glory of the Body of Christ eschatologically. John White, (1988:249) hints at much the same transfiguration motif, as he feels his way forward to explaining the ebb and flow within history of charismatic phenomena.

‘Has the unity for which Christ prayed ever existed in the church? ‘No, you say, but it is to exist in glory. Of course, but Christ is talking about a unity of earthly believers. It is to exist ‘to let the world know’ (John 17 v 20-23), and the world does not know here on earth. The church has never in 2000 years seen that degree of unity among those who are truly Christ’s.’

## **6.10 Colin Buchanan**

The individuals focused in this chapter stand as significant theological ‘shapers’. David Stevens, leader of the Corrymeela Community in Ulster, says: ‘there are people who make reconciliation visible...icons of reconciliation...Mandela and Tutu are well known examples in South Africa. ...reconciliation is embodied in persons, in relationships. It is a life’s practice.’(2004).

The final personal portrait in this chapter is of Colin Buchanan, whose iconic value is in a similar vein. Buchanan has running through him both the charismatic and ecumenical movements, somewhat as a seamless robe. As an evangelical Anglican

scholar, Buchanan addresses the perceived weak sense of ecclesiology among Anglican evangelicals in his book: *Is the Church of England Biblical?* (1998). The book had been over thirty years in gestation, and as well as containing a treasure chest of historical anecdotes, it is a significant work for this thesis, since it includes important observations on ecumenism and the significance of charismatic renewal.

He says of evangelical Anglicans some years ago:

There was a 'backs to the wall' persecution complex – no Evangelical ever became a bishop; the Evangelical colleges and their whole theological stance were dubbed 'Stone Age' by the rest of the Church...the Church of England was still led by the liberal catholic hegemony which had dominated it in the first half of this (20<sup>th</sup>) century, and the atmosphere of that hegemony was not only breathed by all, but had become regarded as the normal and proper atmosphere, the natural genius even, of the Church of England.' (1998:5)

What emerges is a well worked out ecclesiology, New Testament based, which he then uses as a yardstick to measure the contemporary Church of England. First and foremost he expounds a rationale for the authority of scripture. In the process, some sacred cows are demolished such as the apostolic succession of bishops (see above Chapter4)...but the real treasure which emerges is a picture of a church which is (certainly) evangelical, but also catholic and apostolic in life and practice. Buchanan's approach is similar at the outset to Wenham's (see chapter 2), but much less tentative. Whilst Wenham sat cautiously towards Charismatic Renewal, Buchanan is critically friendly towards it. Significantly, he cannot rest logically with a sanitised Church of England, but his church is charismatic, ecumenical, evangelical, and catholic. 'The Church of England must hold to that catholicity of the Church, which is to be discerned in the New Testament, and we should not be content unless or until every possible step is being taken to promote convergence, union or at the very least narrowing of ground between us and other denominations' (1998:291)

A former college Principal, Buchanan reported that 65% of Anglican ordinands were now evangelicals of one kind or another (conversation 1990). At St. John's,

Nottingham, about 60% of the student body were influenced by the charismatic movement to varying extents, which is highly significant for the future of the Church of England. Buchanan was the principle drafter of the Church of England's report on the charismatic movement. (see Chapter 1).

He served for a few years as Vicar of St. Mark's, Gillingham, almost the birthplace of charismatic phenomena in the Church of England). Although he would not claim to be a charismatic in any party sense he is definitely on their side: 'At this point I write as a sympathetic fellow traveller with a large amount of experience of the movement' (:14)

He refuses to categorise his own experience in the usual coinage terms like: 'baptised in the spirit,' or 'filled with the spirit.' However, it is obvious from his appendix on Baptism in the Holy Spirit, that he retains on this issue, as on most issues, a consistent exegesis of scripture and refuses to settle for any imported older Pentecostal theology, which the charismatic pioneers tended to do. Rather, he leaves the lines of tension surrounding the terminology on the theological workbench without forcing them into a framework, which doesn't easily construct (: 296f) There are echoes in Buchanan of some of the CCR theologians already mentioned.

It is interesting to contrast some recent sentences from Fr.Raniero Cantalamessa at the Newman Consultation. 'The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the real specific gift of CCR, and we need to be filled, and periodically refilled with the Holy Spirit...The Baptism in the Holy Spirit *is* Pentecost (emphasis original). For the apostles it was the First Pentecost; for us it is a New Pentecost...it is only when we receive the reality, not just the notion of the Spirit, that things happen, and something is really achieved.' (2006)

Buchanan's theological position seems close to that of John Stott (1964) written four decades previously, as an initial Conservative-Evangelical response to the early positions of the Anglican Charismatics. But Buchanan is almost certainly a 'sympathetic insider' to the charismatic movement rather than an outsider. He notes usefully, that in general terms, the charismatic movement has gone through various phases of interest and emphasis:

'...in the 1960s it was 'baptism in the Spirit', 'prophecy', 'tongues' and 'interpretation.' In the 1970s there was a shift in favour of healings, exorcism and 'spiritual warfare.' In the 1980s there appeared John Wimber and 'words of knowledge.' In the 1990s the whole world has gone after 'Toronto' and that which was quite widely known before (and was characterised as 'being slain in the Spirit') has latterly become *the* (emphasis Buchanan) great test of the presence of the Spirit. (:14,15)

Buchanan touches here on the very identity of the charismatic movement. If the movement's self identity is in terms of experienced 'fire' then does an extinguishing fire mean that the movement has ceased to exist? A significant article header in *Renewal* magazine in the late 1970s was: 'Has the wind dropped?' It is significant because it dared to ask the question, which was both experiential and also theological. Is there room in the charismatic pantheon for stillness, quietness, or indeed a pedestrian spirituality of the Spirit? Can the charismatic movement only live at 'mountain-tops', or is there also a theology for the valleys? This is a question, which has exercised not only charismatic theologians but has also been of pastoral concern. Perhaps this is part of the explanation why there is such an emphasis in charismatic circles upon 'Praise and Worship.' Making music is a fairly certain means of keeping the emotions in play when the spiritual wind appears to have dropped. Could it be that the wind has dropped because the Spirit is blowing in a different direction and the sails are not set to make progress? Could the new wind direction, even the original wind direction, be an ecumenical one? Buchanan's ecumenical interests are of longstanding. In his introduction he mentions that:

Suffice to note that in the 1950's Pentecostalism was assumed by most Anglicans to be a gut-level or emotional form of Christianity which a cool head with adequate grey matter would soon cure and it was a matter of some surprise when Lesslie Newbigin, in *The Household of God* (1952) treated the Pentecostalist Churches as somehow adult among the world churches...(:13)

In recent years he has been involved in the informal conversations between the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. These latter discussions have run alongside and in conjunction with the formal Anglican-Methodist conversations, which have resulted in the latest Anglican-Methodist Covenant. He has also been a representative of the Church of England on the CTBI assembly.

About the newer churches: having noted their enormous growth, he says that they have both drawn people away from the Church of England into their own ranks and have also provided the Church of England with ordinands, (speaking from his direct experience of theological education). But tellingly he notes that: 'They are virtually without interest in ecumenism and have been no part of the recognised Churches in the various ecumenical structures in England.' (:15)

He adds that all new movements show little interest in re-grouping with parents from whom they have broken away e.g. Quakers, Methodists, the Irvingites, the Brethren, the Salvation Army, and many more. Positions are taken up without any forethought of the theology that they will need to hold these movements in place for hundreds of years ahead. Theology is then formed in arrears as the resulting institution starts to require some justification. (Buchanan 1998:15)

In wrestling with these issues Buchanan posits a visibly united church, which positively integrates the authenticity of the charismatic movement, whilst at the same time, asserting a provisionality of much of the surrounding theology. He has thus much in common with the others mentioned above.

## 6.11 Summary

This chapter began by discussing individuals and their approach to biblical exegesis, as a result of their charismatic experience. The individuals selected, exhibited much in common without being congruent in every detail. The exercise opened up the wider questions of liberal interpretations of scripture, touched on the demonic, and showed the significance of the broad ecumenical canvas. Francis Martin's 'hermeneutic of the Spirit' is suggestive of a recall to a deeper spirituality on the part of interpreters. If his approach is heeded, it could herald fresh energy to the ecumenical movement as a whole from the basis of a re-opening up of scripture. There is a challenge in Messianic Judaism, which is effectively a challenge about the goal of the ecumenical movement. Do the churches stop at 'Christian' unity or are they being called beyond themselves?

In the sub-set of significant individuals mentioned in the chapter, one collectively has a 'sign' of what could easily emerge as the core of a visibly united communion. They represent a partial realisation of the kind of 'growing into union' that Colin Buchanan and others advocated in *Growing into Union* (1970).

This brings the study to a closer look at contemporary ecumenical and charismatic reality, and a realistic look at the prospects for the future.



## **CHAPTER 7**

### **RECONSTRUCTING ECUMENICAL THEOLOGY: TOWARDS A CLOSER VISIBLE UNITY**

#### **7.1 The indelible ecumenical root of Pentecostalism**

Hollenweger (1997:348) sees an inherent 'ecumenical root' in classical Pentecostalism, believing that in most places it started out as an ecumenical renewal movement. Back near the beginning of modern Pentecostalism, Charles Parham looked forward to the time 'when baptised by the Holy Ghost into one Body, the gloriously redeemed Church without spot or wrinkle, having the same mind, judgement, and speaking the same things.' Parham also saw himself as an 'apostle of unity.' Hollenweger lists several others in that first generation who in different ways saw the hope of Pentecostalism as ushering in an eventual Christian unity (See Hollenweger 1997:347).

So can the Charismatic Movement, by renewing the churches in their life and mission, be the principal means of their eventual reunification? This original conviction, which evoked the present study, came more at the level of personal spirituality, than a deduction from theological reading. Certainly forty years ago one hoped that progress from charismatic renewal to united church would happen with a degree of inevitability.

Thirty years ago, Muhlen said: 'today more than ever we see that God is summoning us to contribute in our Churches to a renewal which can lead in the future to concrete reconciliation and unity.' (1978:123)

But even in the early days of renewal, one sensed that however sound one's spiritual instinct, it wouldn't be a simple matter to stand back and watch charismatic renewal

meld the churches together. A process would be involved which needed to work through many complexities.

So in chapter 1 the basic research question was sharpened into four specific questions:

1. Does Charismatic Renewal by its very existence and nature compel the different churches towards each other?
2. How far, can charismatic renewal 'renew' a denomination? Is that denomination willing to re-appraise its own history through new lenses, and consequently be open to re-float some of its theology?
3. Are the corresponding charismatic manifestations in other denominations being noted, evaluated trans-denominationally and attempts made to co-ordinate them? Will appropriate leaders read the clues and try to progress them forwards in engagement with official ecumenism?
- 4: Does the charismatic movement make a serious contribution to discussion about Christian initiation and the ministry of the church? (See chapter 5)

The assumption in framing the questions above, was that charismatic renewal, *as initially experienced in the 1960s* (my emphasis) would continue on its course in much the same way as it seemed to have started. It would wash down all barriers in its way, gaining a progressively greater number of adherents as it went. Eventually whole denominations would be transformed into Fountain Trust style organisations. Denominations, self-consciously being renewed in the Spirit would look across at each other and allow themselves to coalesce into structural unity. Any kind of continuing denominational identity would seem superfluous. So are there still grounds for hope, or was the original charismatic ecumenical vision fundamentally flawed?

## **7.2 The decline of the charismatic ecumenical vision**

Referring to the early years of charismatic renewal Baptist David Pawson (circa 1970) in *Renewal* magazine glimpsed the ecumenical potential with the descriptive phrase: ‘The water rose above the fences and the ducks swam together.’ Historically, the water gradually fell and the fences re-appeared. He lamented the return to denominational renewal groups. It is obvious to any observer that the course of charismatic renewal has not pursued a smooth, all conquering path in the last forty years. In the 1970s, when charismatic renewal was still in its adolescence as a movement, it was easier to glimpse the ecumenical possibilities. But in sharp contrast, it has also bred much diversity and division within its own ranks; and several facets of this diversity have been alluded to in this thesis. Without doubt, many historic churches have been ‘touched’ by renewal in the last forty years, but it would be absurd to claim that any have been ‘renewed’ as denominations in the way one initially assumed might happen. O’Keeffe, speaking specifically of CCR says: ‘It is suggested that the best thing that could happen to the movement would be that it permeate the mainstream of church life with its charismatic spirituality and lose its own distinctive identity in the process.’ (:246). The charismatic renewal has never ‘conquered’ any major denomination in the sense that it has set new uniform norms of worship, doctrine and practice through total permeation. Rather like the Evangelical Movement or the Oxford Movement within the Church of England, it is more accurate to describe the charismatic movement as a major flavouring which has leavened the whole (especially in worship) rather than as a distinct reformism with a sharp edge which has transformed the whole. But no historic church has actually outlawed charismatic renewal. As a river broadens into an estuary, it is difficult to detect and measure all the effects of renewal as it filters into broad denominations. If one

attempts to estimate the influence of charismatics at ecumenical conferences like Swanwick, for example, it is difficult to measure. Charismatics there undoubtedly are at all ecumenical conferences, but one can only assume that those many 'ecumenical-charismatics' make their contributions out of their own integrity without being overly conscious of being charismatic. Perhaps that is the end result. When the charismatic and ecumenical meld together, so that the best insights of both are combined, either in an individual or a group, then one loses the unique consciousness of either. But nothing has actually been lost. One might even say that church unity has been rediscovered for that small locus.

The central conviction of this thesis is that Charismatic Renewal might offer to the churches a vision of ecumenism and a process of growing into unity that cannot quite be realised in any other way. The Charismatic (or pneumatological) way of ecumenism is not one way of doing unity alongside a number of other options. It is an essential part of the methodology of growing together. A clue is given by Petit (1986): 'to step out in faith and unity from the security of our churches and share the truths of our various traditions in the power of the Holy Spirit.' (Appendix 4) As the Holy Spirit is experienced by Catholics and others in a more tangible way, a dialectical process is started within. (cf. Tugwell).

The experience of Spirit Baptism appears to make real for many the word of Jesus that the Spirit would lead into all truth (John 16 v13). There are several sides to this 'leading into all truth.' In the apostolic era from the post-resurrection appearances onwards the process of revelation and theological construction was on a steep learning curve. The Spirit would tell of things yet to come (John 16 v 13). There was an expectancy of ongoing revelation. However, set against this there took shape a sense of a deposit of faith 'once delivered to the saints.' (Jude v 3). This deposit could be

seen as the core doctrines, which described the inalienable truths of the Gospel. Further revelation there might be, but it could not contradict the sense of the basic deposit of faith. This tension between the two has had to be worked out throughout the history of the church. The tendency is always present for either of the two extremes to deny the other. For those who cling to the deposit of faith, to them further revelation is almost blasphemy, like adding to the prophecies in the Book of Revelation (22 v 18,19). For others of a more liberal, open cast of mind (the searching new age pilgrim) the tendency is to elevate new revelations and experiences to the great neglect of the historical deposits of faith. The term 'gnosticism' has been resurrected and applied to some charismatic groups with good reason.

It is into this classic scenario that Charismatic Renewal has come. With two millenia of Christian experience, history and theology to look back over, the scenario is one of a deposit of faith set very much in credal concrete for many clergy and laity. Especially in the Roman Catholic Church with the its 'Petrine' ministry and magisterium, there is a culture of the received, almost monolithic guardian of orthodoxy.

In the Protestant culture the deposit is Biblical authority to appeal to with differing modes of interpretation. But a common charismatic experience brings both cultures into dialogue with the new experience, and the Catholic and Protestant cultures into dialogue with each other. There is also the exciting challenge of further revelation itself, thus bringing modern Christians back to the same frontier that faced the first Christians. All experiences of the Holy Spirit are mediated through the lens of a particular ecclesiastical culture and tend to be interpreted by the theological guidelines of that culture. So applying this to the last forty years and the path that charismatic renewal has followed, it seems that one of the main reasons the initial

vision failed to carry through, was simply because *ecumenism was never naturally near the top of anyone's agenda*. (my emphasis). In turn, that was for the very reason suggested above: the controlling effect of the faith culture of that denomination.

So for evangelicals, ecumenism was perceived hopefully as all Christians becoming conservative evangelical. Doctrine was prior, new experiences were under scrutiny. As charismatic renewal became accepted among evangelicals it was primarily owned for its 'empowerment for mission' aspect. Outreach, evangelism, fresh ability to impact the nation, these were the obvious attractions to evangelicals whose primary focus was evangelism.

The Restorationists perceived the charismatic movement as a call to radical separation and the building of the 'pure' para-church. Denominational reunions were ipso-facto irrelevant. It is worth noting that many of the pioneer Restorationist leaders and followers came from 'Brethren' backgrounds. Their controlling culture was already separatist. So when further restoring was called for following Holy Spirit renewal, the natural instinct was to stand further apart. But as Andrew Walker has argued above, their independent stance lasted for ten years at best before the traffic started to return to the main denominations.

The Roman Catholics embraced renewal but mainly perceived it as exactly that: the 'bringing-alive' of the given-ness of their anciently rooted church. Ecumenism to the Catholic, where the self perception is that the 'fullness of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church subsists in the Roman Catholic church' is matter of the separated brethren rejoining. Thus, however clearly the ecumenical motivation is glimpsed, it does not take long for the vision to slide down the priority list.

Each of these three responses falls short of the initial charismatic ecumenical vision. Had it been clearly grasped and responded to positively forty years ago, we could have conceivably been much further down the ecumenical road.

Have things changed? For the denominational evangelicals there is a greater acceptance of the ecumenical climate than forty years ago. The Restorationists have peaked and have opened their windows to their neighbours. The Roman Catholic charismatics have sensed a fresh call to unity from their recent Newman conference. In the midst of it all, the Alpha course, as the latest 'sign', has provided ample confirmation that renewal, evangelism and ecumenism are inseparable. So the process may have returned to the start again.

### **7.3 Official ecumenical pessimism.**

Meanwhile, from the side of mainstream ecumenism, pessimism is now official.

The last forty years have seen an almost ceaseless ecumenical energy put forth from the churches to seek their visible unity, yet despite all the efforts it seems impossible to speculate whether unity is a long way off or just around the corner. In 2002, several ecumenical committees admitted that much of the earlier decades of ecumenical work had yielded little of really lasting value, and the ecumenical movement was being described in quasi-pessimistic terms such as 'run out of steam' or 'passing through an ecumenical winter.' (from own meeting notes and conversations). More recently Paul Avis summarised this ecumenical weariness (from the Church of England's viewpoint) in these words:

The ecumenical movement seems to have reached a watershed. Its momentum slowed noticeably in the last decade of the twentieth century. In the first decade of the new century it is definitely faltering. The dreams that marked the heyday of ecumenism, of 'the coming great church' and of visible unity by the year 'whatever', now look naïve, if not reckless. Ecumenical endeavour is now shot through with doubt and uncertainty. Inertia and apathy confront ecumenism on every side. A fresh vision is now needed and ecumenical theology needs to be reconstructed. (Avis 2004:91).

Paul Avis here identifies two emphases: vision and theological reconstruction. They need to walk hand in hand. Just as charismatically, we may be back to the start and ready to have a fresh try, so also the official ecumenical movement needs fresh motivation. Where is it to come from?

Both CTE and CTBI, as described in chapter 2, have made a good start on their long haul tasks, and as instruments, they are unlikely to be improved upon. The intention of the new instruments, in contrast to the BCC, was not to ‘do unity vicariously’ on behalf of the churches, but to catalyse and enable the churches to seek their own unity together. This is a harder task than the British Council of Churches had in its day, calling for special skills on the part of its officers. CTE operates a co-ordinating and visionary leadership role especially for the many ‘intermediate’ County Ecumenical Bodies. At county level it is almost universally found that the Anglican and Roman Catholic Bishops, The Baptist Superintendent, the Methodist District Chair, and the United Reformed Church Moderator meet regularly as an ‘episcopate.’ Some Counties’ leaders have entered into a personal covenant with each other. At this County level too, is found a forum of co-ordination for the LEPs and the Churches Together Groups in most aspects of their work: mission, evangelism, social action, and liaison with County Civil authorities etc.

So what is in place in England is an ecclesial matrix which enables visible expression of the measure of unity, which the various churches can now rise to. They hold up a structural icon to the churches as one way of giving visible manifestation to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church as it seeks its fuller identity. (Some Scottish and Welsh towns have similar Councils of Churches, but operate in their own way). They honour and accept denominational histories whilst at the same time responding seriously to the call to come together. CTE has not, and may not actually issue in any



immediate denominational mergers, but what could well happen is an increasing measure of recognition of members and ministries across the denominations. It is feasible that a stage could be reached where the denominations might meld together in a natural process, which may be real but patchy. It was recognised in some of the earlier single congregation LEPs that 'Although they may not necessarily be conscious of it, these *joint churches* (emphasis original) are a partial manifestation of a visibly united church. The history of LEPs is a separate area of study. They now number in four figures and they have been instrumental in applying a pressure on the denominational structures to think and adapt ecumenically. Here again, there is an interesting correspondence here with some of the thinking that was envisaged in *Growing into Union*. (Buchanan et al. 1970).

But these 'new ecumenical instruments' in themselves are at best an enabling matrix. Progress towards unity still depends upon the spiritual will and commitment of individuals and churches within that matrix.

If the churches are to move in the direction of visible unity, then Paul Avis' essentials of fresh vision and ecumenical theological reconstruction need to be sought and worked at. It will take several leaders of strong, clear and vision over several generations to hold up a vision of unity for the whole Christian Church as an imperative. In the Declaration on Ecumenism from Vatican II the importance of training leaders with ecumenical perspective is noted as crucial for ecumenical progress:

'It is important that future pastors and priests should have mastered a theology that has been carefully elaborated in this way and not polemically, especially in what concerns the relations of separated brothers and sisters with the Catholic church. For it is on the formation which priests receive that largely depends the instruction and spiritual formation that the faithful and religious need.' *Redintegratio* (Flannery 1995 :499-523 para10)

Many such leaders emanate from or have linkages with ecumenical communities. The latter have rich experiences to feed into the conversation, from such communities as Rostrevor, Corrymeela, Iona, Taize, and the Maranatha movement, which combines unity, renewal and healing. Charismatic Renewal should mean here a radical open-ness to the Spirit, not a gathering of the like-minded seeking a nostalgic return to the patterns of previous generations. Such elements could be deemed 'prophetic'.

In a slightly different vein, 'apostles of unity' could well be recognised as a species, who exist as a contemporary grace and charisma for this age. If their authoritative insights could be listened to, weighed and integrated into the networks and matrices (see below), there might emerge something highly constructive, blending charisma and office in a way not seen since the early church. This suggestion raises the issue of universal primacy; an issue left to one side in this thesis but noted here, as it becomes a relevant part of the discussion in this context. (eg. would a universal matrix, such as might be assumed if visible unity were achieved, require a Papal 'Petrine' kind of primacy or a periodic Moderator model?).

Any vision of unity will involve a combination of unity and diversity, charism and institution, doctrinal foci coupled to a plurality of spiritualities. Within the overall process, charismatics and charismatic academics need to seek a higher profile and play a much more key part than previously, especially within official ecumenical structures. Hollenweger (1997:373) quotes Jerry Sandidge 'Pentecostals need 'bridge people' who will step into the ecumenical arena with their gloves on, confronting all the ecumenical issues of the conciliar movement...The Pentecostal misunderstanding of the ecumenical movement as a super world-church needs to be corrected.' (from: Sandidge 'Consultation Summary')

In the same way as the Patristic Church wrestled with Credal affirmations through ecumenical councils, so the modern equivalent of those early councils, should continue to wrestle in a formal way, in the expectation that theological agreement will emerge to command wide assent. The World Council of Churches would continue to be a main global forum for consultation. Other ecumenical networks and matrices designed to enable joint work at various levels, such as CTE and CTBI, are already models in this field; but continental wide networks such as the Council of European Churches (CEC) and the like need to be developed. Such instruments can be ‘tailor-made’ to suit the particular situation.

The dialogue, as an ecumenical methodology, clears away misinformation and biased perceptions, and slowly reveals the perspectives from which separate parties argue. The layers of assumption are peeled back and the real differences and similarities can emerge clearly. Convergence best describes the process that is in operation through dialogue. The Vatican-Pentecostal Dialogue is a visionary example of this kind. Other dialogues would continue as they have been for some years now, leading to re-union or partial reunion between two or more denominations. Of particular importance would be those aspects of dialogue, which touch on the historical roots of particular denominations: their worship, development, traditional ethical stances and doctrinal development. These should be scrutinised alongside those of other denominations.

#### **7.4 From Vision and Leadership to closer unity**

Given the realism of ecumenical history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century one see broadly three possibilities: firstly: some denominations could join up in a progressive series of mergers. For example, the Methodists might rejoin the Anglicans initially, and later the two could possibly grow into a more formal relationship with the Roman

Catholics. Such progressive unity would normally be the outcome of dialogues. A Catholic – Orthodox rapprochement is theoretically possible but a very long haul.(see Appendix 6)

The second and more likely possibility is that the separated denominations would increasingly share their life and ministries, as each fragment felt able. They would do this under the watchful eye of an umbrella organisation such as CTE (above) set up for the purpose. Eventually, as ministries became mutually affirmed and integrated, the umbrella group would either become superfluous to the process or may *de facto* become the new ‘episcope’ for a united church.

The third possibility, which is in fact present reality: the first two will proceed simultaneously and interact with each other. Individual congregations and denominations will do what they can ecumenically as far as their faith and conscience allows. A Restorationist is highly unlikely to abandon his pristine vision completely to join an ancient denomination, but he may co-operate at many levels in mission and evangelism. The Anglican may see himself as a providential ‘bridge-church’ called to promote dialogue both to right and left. A Roman Catholic may still see himself as an ecclesiastical benchmark that needs some adjustment, but not too much. Even Pentecostal scholar, Frank Macchia, affirms that: ‘The Roman Catholic Church has a certain ‘parental’ role in the family tree of the Christian Church in the world.’ (2006:227).

But conversely, there will be many Protestant groups for whom a return to Rome is a bridge too far at the moment. Among the many permutations, each church will insist on retaining its freedom to explore such ecumenism as it can indulge in with a good conscience. Stuart Bell asks: ‘Cannot we find a basis for a new church for England that can encompass us all? Not a ‘return to the fold’. Not a pragmatic business-like

merger. But a new church that would emerge from a cathartic self-examination of all that is right and wrong in our churches today. And a new church that would be the basis for an ongoing unity process?' (Bell 1988)

There is still a very powerful permeation among the more fundamentalist churches of the idea, that anything of unity other than the 'unity of the spirit' is man made and doomed to create a harlot system. Merrill Unger has: '...the worldwide ecumenical movement...is attempting a man-made unity at the expense of revealed truth. Such a venture is an open invitation to increased demonic delusion (2 Thessalonians 2 v 1-10).' (1971:168). Gee observed that the bitterest opponents of the Pentecostal movement have been the fundamentalists. (Hollenweger 1997:349).

Hocken goes with the idea of re-integration towards unity, but makes a clear distinction between three kinds of ecclesial body separated from the ancient churches. The Pentecostals (and some of their immediate predecessors) represent revival movements that have taken on structural forms and have fragmented into denominations. Secondly, the Reformation churches (eg. Lutheran, Reformed, Mennonite) are principle churches, founded on certain doctrinal principles. Then there are the national schism churches formed by separation from Western Catholicism (e.g. Anglican, Scandinavian Lutheran) These latter retain greater elements of Catholic substance.

'In this situation, reintegration has to be on the basis of the work of the Holy Spirit in each grouping and tradition, which means respecting its original character in its positive witness. The root problem seems to be how to integrate revivals, principles and organic substance. The history of the ecumenical movement suggests that any kind of ecclesiastical democracy that treats all the divided Churches as equal partners is doomed to frustration.' (1994:158,159)

Hocken's 'blueprint for unity' here, is saying that what has to be re-integrated into the greater whole is what was originally the work of the Spirit within the particular group. That alone is the treasure to be preserved; the rest is baggage, which may be

discarded. Hocken mentions that the RC church has from time to time welcomed currents of revival associated with charismatic preachers e.g. St. Anthony of Padua, St. Bernadine, St. Vincent Ferrer. (1994:159). It is here that the evidence of Catholic Charismatic Renewal is so vital to the whole ecumenical enterprise. Here we have modelled what can happen when the freedom the Spirit gives is allowed to shape new patterns within a historic denomination. 'Ultimately re-integration is impossible without the historic Church in communion with Rome being seen convincingly to be the Church of the Word and the Church of the Spirit.' (Hocken 1994:159).

Put simply, the Roman church has to convince beyond all doubt that it is indeed a church of Word, Sacrament and Holy Spirit at least as much as the separated bodies ever were in the heyday of their separateness. Nothing less than this will suffice if the call to reintegrate is to be taken seriously as a call of God.

The mirror inverse is also true that the separated bodies need to return to their own spiritually rooted convictions and dynamics and be willing to move on from the comfortable familiarity of their own denominational life and rise to a new call to go forward and re-integrate.

In contrast, attempts at a complete reconstruction of the church, through movements like Restorationism, look logical but are flawed by nature. The truths, for which such movements stand as witness for a while, seem eventually to be returned to the mainstream, making the original movement redundant.

Perhaps the major thing required both of Catholic Charismatics and Charismatics in general is for the charismatic ecumenical vision of pioneers like Michael Harper to be 're-published'. The failure to grasp the original vision by the first generation of leaders and follow it through, was the principal cause of failure. That original vision has been re-glimpsed in the last decade through the Alpha phenomenon. The Newman

conference of 2005 issued its fresh call to unity; and as recently as 2006 the summer Conference of the Lutheran Ecumenical Institute of Strasbourg, had Pentecostalism and Ecumenism as a main theme. Thus the scene has been re-set, an another opportunity presents itself for another attempt at envisioning for the ecumenical significance of charismatic renewal.

### **7.5 Summary of main research findings**

The ecumenical nature of charismatic renewal is a global question of a global phenomenon. Consequently the methodology of the study required both choices to be made of relevant detailed issues for discussion, and also the essentiality of integrating those issues into the broader canvas. There was considerable risk in the thesis of superficiality and generality in attempting the broad scope, but the choice of in-depth specific issues had to be significant for the global as well as the local. These criteria determined the chapter selections.

Chapter 2 traced the history of the ecumenical movement in England since the Second World War and showed the considerable progress made since 1987 in local ecumenism. This effectively gave rise to the new Ecumenical Instruments and created a unique ecumenical landscape enabling further ecumenical progress. In the process, charismatics are located throughout the English churches, but are not in any sense organised with conscious ecumenical priorities.

Chapter 3 studied the extent of the penetration of the Charismatic Movement into the Roman Catholic Church, specifically to identify its early ecumenical leanings. CCR has made a major contribution to this whole subject especially through the work of its theologians. More particularly, their grappling with sacramental theology has been a major contribution to enlighten the study of Baptism and Episcopacy, which is further developed in Chapter 5. Several secondary issues emerged from the main discussion,

such as Charism and Institution, and ‘apostles of unity.’ The latter is both a challenge to broaden the concept of existing patterns of episcopacy, and also suggests a charismatic basis of ‘orders of ministry.’

Chapter 4 on ‘koinonia’ theology and the World Council of Churches demonstrated the essential pneumatological shape of theological thinking at global level.

Chapter 6 showed the effects of individual theological re-thinking in those who had experienced charismatic renewal. The common thread was their doctrine of scripture and hermeneutics. This exercise drew into the discussion those called ‘liberal’, and thus opened the landscape, with the promise of doctrines of scripture and wider authority emerging to command the widest assent.

The thesis overall has traced the ecumenical issues of charismatic renewal in detail since 1980. It has noted the changed shape of the movement, even its attenuation in some quarters, but the conviction still persists that it is fundamentally ecumenical by nature. The thesis has shown that there are ways through traditional problems such as episcopacy. The opportunity theoretically exists for churches to mutually recognise members and ministries. In short, the ecumenical movement at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century stands facing fresh opportunities, and calls again for a fresh commitment.

The prayer of Jesus, that his followers should be one, especially those who come to faith in him through the words of believers in succeeding generations, is made with a powerful rationale: that the world may believe. There is a fundamental connection between the visible unity of Christian believers and the church's effectiveness in evangelism and mission. But is unity still felt as an imperative by the churches?

Herbert (2002) suggests the reason why it ought to be:

The church is the model towards which the whole human family will look for its healing and reconciliation. To the degree that the Church is effectively gathered in unity in the assembly of worship around God and the Lamb, it is the sign of hope and the bearer of good news to the whole world. Neither the church nor the world ‘sets



the agenda.' God has his agenda of shalom, unity and communion. We must seek to be loyal to it. So the question of Christian Unity always needs to be considered in the light of what it is for.

What would be the value of unanimity without purpose? Human unity is the goal of God's mission to his creation.

In studying a century of the successes and struggles of the official Ecumenical Movement there is a sense that there is still a missing 'something' which the movement needs to enable it towards its goal. The Ecumenical Movement needs the grace of charismatic renewal for its own energising. But in its turn charismatic renewal needs to rediscover its primary calling to the whole church as an ecumenical motivator. It can only do this if it is true to its root calling as 'primal spirituality' (Cox 1996:83). Charismatic renewal is essentially an exercise in spirituality, before it develops into a reflective and theological mode. It is concerned primarily with recovering first-hand relationships with the Divine, both individually and corporately. If it is less than this, and becomes in any sense 'second-hand', its power source and its ecumenical nature attenuate. But there is very little that is inevitable about Charismatic renewal propelling ecumenism forward, in the short term. It is only so in the long haul and by co-ordinating several fronts simultaneously, that will reach the goal of a closer visible unity. That is why this thesis has required a study across wide areas, but coupled to some selected individual depth study. If the churches are to draw a maximum benefit for ecumenism, then a vision has to be re-grasped, before things can move forward pragmatically. One hopes that this present study may be a contribution to the total exercise.

## Appendix 1 Ecumenical Dialogues

List of Dialogues given to the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland at Swanwick Conference in 1996; compiled by Colin Davey. The length of the list illustrates clearly the extent of effort and the key place that dialogues now have in ecumenical progress. The list only shows the then current dialogues in progress in Feb. 1996. It is quite noticeable that the dialogues only encompass the older denominations. There is no trace yet of newer churches or older Pentecostal churches. The Vatican/Pentecostal dialogue stands out as the glorious exception, though Davey does not have it listed.

### **International:**

*Baptist/Orthodox (informal), Anglican-Lutheran, Anglican/Methodist, Anglican/Orthodox, Anglican/Roman Catholic (ARCIC 1 & 2), Lutheran/Catholic, Lutheran/Orthodox, Orthodox/Methodist, Orthodox/Oriental-Orthodox, Orthodox/Roman Catholic, Orthodox/World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Reformed/Roman Catholic. (all these are dialogues leading to Convergence statements.)*

### **UK/Ireland:**

Informal Conversations:

*Baptist/Church of England, Baptist/Independent Methodist Churches, Baptist/Fellowship of Churches of Christ, Church of England/United Reformed Church, Church of England/Methodist/United Reformed Church, Methodist/United Reformed Church, Independent, Methodists/Wesleyan Reformed/Countess of Huntingdon's Connection, Methodist/Roman Catholic, English Anglican/Roman Catholic.*

### **Wales:**

*Baptist/Presbyterian/Union of Welsh Independents/Methodist/United Reformed.*

### **Scotland:**

*SCIFU (Scottish Church Initiative for Union) Church of Scotland/Methodist/Scottish Congregational Church/Episcopal Church of Scotland/United Reformed Church.*

### **International: mutual recognition and shared ministry**

*Anglican/Lutheran (Meissen Agreement) Church of England and the German Evangelical Churches.*

*Anglican/Lutheran/Reformed (Reuilly Common Statement) incl. French Lutheran and Reformed.*

*Church of England/Moravian (Fetter Lane Agreement)*

### **International: mutual recognition and interchangeability of ministry**

*Anglican/Lutheran. Porvoo Common Statement. (See Appendix 5)*

Also listed is the attempt to form a *Welsh National Covenant* involving Anglicans/Baptists/Methodists/Presbyterians/United Reformed Church. (This has currently stalled 2006).

## **Appendix 2**

### **The 1977 Anglican Evangelicals' Conference. Statement on the Roman Catholic Church.**

#### **The Present Situation:**

- a. We recognise and welcome the changing situation and the movement for renewal in the Roman Catholic church since the Second Vatican Council, and we want to respond to it.
- b. Seeing ourselves and Roman Catholics as fellow-Christians, we repent of attitudes that have seemed to deny it.
- c. We welcome the growing emphasis upon the Bible as normative for Christian faith and conduct.
- d. We wish to be better informed concerning the Roman Catholic church today and will support and encourage opportunities for dialogue between us at all levels.
- e. We believe that agreement on fundamental doctrines must precede any formal act of reunion.
- f. While still regarding the major issues of the Reformation as crucial, we welcome the progress made towards doctrinal agreement such as is evidenced in the ARCIC (Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission) statements.

Where clarification is needed

With a diversity of statements emanating from Roman Catholic circles, we find it perplexing to know their present doctrinal position. We feel the need for some official denials of past claims along with official statements of current agreement. At the same time, we should welcome an indication from Roman Catholics of clarifications they desire from us. For our part, we need further elucidation in the following areas:

- a. Does the Roman Catholic church place itself under the Old and New Testament Scriptures as the final authority under Christ?
- b. What is the relationship of tradition and the teaching authority of the church to Holy Scripture?
- c. What authority today have the statements of such Councils as those of Trent and Vatican I?
- d. Are men justified by grace through faith, with their good works a fruit of justification and not a source of merit?
- e. How is the Eucharist related to Christ's sacrifice on the Cross?
- f. What standing have the Marian dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Bodily Assumption?
- g. What authority would be vested in any contemplated universal primacy?
- h. How far could the present policy on mixed marriages and separate schooling be modified to heal the divisive effects of the present position?

#### Action to be taken

In restating our attitude to the Roman Catholic church, we want simultaneously to affirm our close doctrinal and spiritual ties with non-Anglican evangelicals, which we are most anxious not to jeopardise. To this end, we need to clarify the Anglican stance on comprehensiveness.

- a) We shall all work towards full communion between our two churches. We believe that the visible unity of all professing Christians should be our goal.
- b) We ask Roman Catholics to try to understand our difficulties as we seek to understand theirs.
- c) We wish ARCIC to amplify their doctrinal statements in those areas where we have asked for further clarification.
- d) We shall encourage every kind of cooperation that may bring the goal of full communion nearer; some would welcome intercommunion as a step in this direction.
- e) Realising the urgency of the situation, we shall make time to get to know and to learn from one another, especially by praying and studying the Bible together.

#### Commentary on this section:

The word 'renewal' is used in section M1 (a) and whilst its meaning is not specified, it clearly refers to the developments that have taken place in the Roman Catholic church since the second Vatican Council. The significance of Vatican 2 is picked up in Chapter 3. Many evangelicals saw hope here in that Vatican 2 did re-emphasise the importance of the authority of scripture.

M1 (e) puts doctrinal agreement on fundamentals prior to any formal act of reunion. The priority of doctrine is understandable among evangelicals, (see Wenham above) but the fact that the possibility of formal re-union with Rome is stated is a courageous step forward among them.

M2 represents the kind of open and honest statement that needs to precede realistic dialogue. Though brief, the statements set out clearly and succinctly a number of issues of longstanding concern. At the same time there is a reciprocal invitation for the Roman Catholic Church to ask for clarifications from evangelicals.

M3 (d) is very specific on one of Rome's 'sticking points.' It merely states that some evangelicals see the sharing of Holy Communion as an aid to re-union. Generally speaking the Roman Catholic church does not accept this means to the end. For them inter communion *is* (emphasis mine) the end when full agreement has been reached.

M3 (e) brings the section to an end on a pragmatic note: the call to get to know each other, learn from each other, pray and study the Bible together. Ecumenical pragmatism has proved to be a principal way forward in recent years.

## Appendix 3

### **On the Unique place of England in Ecumenism (from the introduction to *Called to be One*, 1996. 1.1)**

‘Geography and history have conspired together to give the churches in England a privileged role in the ecumenical movement. Three major Christian traditions, the Church of England, the Free Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, live as close neighbours serving the same communities. Alongside them and under the same social and political structures there are also a great variety of smaller churches. The British Council of Churches was established in 1942 to provide a meeting place and framework of co-operation between the Church of England, the major Free Churches and some smaller churches. After the Second World War an increasing number of local councils of churches brought Christians together locally. In the 1960s and 1970s several union schemes between different Free Churches and also between the Church of England and some Free Churches were proposed, but only one came to fruition when churches of the former Congregational and Presbyterian Churches and of the Churches of Christ formed the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom. When the Proposals for a Covenant between the United Reformed Church, the Methodist Church, the Moravian Church and the Church of England failed to receive the approval of the General Synod (of the Church of England) in 1982, for the first time in twenty-five years there were no discussions about union.

### **The text of the 1987 Swanwick Declaration : ‘No Longer Strangers – Pilgrims!’**

‘Appointed by our churches and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit we declare that this, the broadest assembly of British and Irish churches ever to meet in these islands has reached a common mind. We are aware that not all Christians are represented amongst us but we look forward to the time when they will share fully with us.

‘We came with different experiences and traditions, some with long ecumenical service, some for whom this is a new adventure. We are one band of pilgrims. We are old and young, women and men, black and white, lay and ordained and we travelled from the four corners of these islands to meet at Swanwick in Derbyshire. There we met, we listened, we talked, we worshipped, we prayed, we sat in silence, deeper than words. Against the background of so much suffering and sinfulness in our society we were reminded of our call to witness that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. We affirmed that this world with all its sin and splendour belongs to God. Young people called on us to be ready to sort out our priorities so that we could travel light and concentrate on our goal. Driven on by a Gospel imperative to seek unity that the world may believe, we rejoiced that we are pilgrims together and strangers no longer.’

‘We now declare together our readiness to commit ourselves to each other under God. Our earnest desire is to become more fully, in his own time, the one Church of Christ, united in faith, communion, pastoral care and mission. Such unity is the gift of God. With gratitude we have truly experienced this gift, growing amongst us in these days. We affirm our openness to this growing unity in obedience to the Word of God, so that we may fully share, hold in common and offer to the world those gifts which we have received and still hold in separation. In the unity we seek we recognise that there will not be uniformity but legitimate diversity.’

‘It is our conviction that, as a matter of policy at all levels and in all places, our churches must now move from co-operation to clear commitment to each other, in search of the unity for which Christ prayed and in common evangelism and service of the world.’

‘We urge church leaders and representatives to take all necessary steps to present, as soon as possible, to our church authorities, assemblies and congregations, the Report of this Conference together with developed proposals for ecumenical instruments to help the churches of these islands to move ahead together.’

‘Continuing to trust in the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, we look forward with confidence to sharing with our own churches the joys of this historic Conference. We thank God for all those who, from Lent ’86 and before, have been part of this pilgrimage. We feel their presence with us. We urge our churches to confirm by decision and action the hopes and vision on which we have laid hold, and which we shall not let go.’

‘This is a new beginning. We set out on our further pilgrimage ready to take risks and determined not to be put off by ‘dismal stories.’ We resolve that no discouragement will make us once relent our avowed intent to be pilgrims together. Leaving behind painful memories and reaching out for what lies ahead, we press on towards the full reconciliation in Christ of all things in heaven and on earth, that God has promised in his Kingdom.’

Lord God, we thank you  
For calling us into the company  
Of those who trust in Christ  
And seek to obey his will.  
May your Spirit guide and strengthen us  
In mission and service to your world;  
For we are strangers no longer  
But pilgrims together on the way to your Kingdom. Amen.’

### **From the Presidents’ Preface of Called to be One (1996)**

The four presidents of Churches Together in England: The Archbishop of Canterbury, the RC Archbishop of Westminster, the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council, and the Russian Orthodox Bishop representing his own church and a cluster of other smaller churches (including some Black Pentecostal Churches).

‘What kind of church is required for those things? Surely it is not the divided Christendom we have inherited at the end of this millennium – following the separation of Orthodox East and Catholic West in 1054, following the break-up and mutual persecutions of the Christian West in the wake of the Reformation and the attempt to impose uniformity in Britain and Ireland in the seventeenth century! Surely it is not compartmentalised Christian communities, many of which have given a cold welcome to the African, Asian and Caribbean Christians who have come to England in the second half of this century.’

## Appendix 4

### Ecumenical linkages in *Good News*. (No 62. February/March 1986)

There is a mention of ARM (Anglican Renewal Ministries) and GEAR (Group for Evangelism and Renewal in the United Reformed Church):

‘At the February NSC meeting we met with representatives from Anglican Renewal Ministries and the Group of Evangelism and Growth within the United Reformed Church and discussed ways in which we might *co-operate more closely in the future* (emphasis mine). Following our last meeting with them in October 1983, we are now jointly publishing *Saints Alive*, a renewal course particularly suitable for parish use, and at this meeting it was decided to form a small council consisting of two members from each of the main denominational renewal agencies to meet once a year to discuss matters of mutual interest.

### Ecumenism in Catholic Gibraltar.

‘The Charismatic Renewal in Gibraltar hopes to develop ecumenical links with the local Anglican Church, which so far has been unaffected by Renewal and is very traditional. Charles Harrison, a leader of Charismatic Renewal in Gibraltar, was at the February NSC meeting and he shared how he had invited Colin Urquhart to come to Gibraltar early next year to speak, in the hope of encouraging Anglicans to take an interest in Renewal. Charles says he has a real burden for ecumenism, and during his trip to Britain also made contact with the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship.....’

Charles Harrison would not be untypical of the many instances of the ecumenical breadth generated in individuals by a charismatic background, whilst at the same time remaining loyal to their parent denomination. Colin Urquhart was one of a cluster of Anglican vicars who brought their parish churches into renewal in the early 1970’s and later went on to international ministries and founded new teaching communities. The Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship International is ‘a-denominational’ rather than ‘ecumenical’, though it is certainly that. It has had considerable influence internationally as its title implies, but stops short of being a church. It embraces a charismatic spirituality in breadth and depth and operates primarily through dinner gatherings and conferences.

### Reconciliation Tour in Northern Ireland.

‘Christians from England are being invited to make a special pilgrimage of reconciliation to Northern Ireland at the end of May to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rising in Ireland.

As part of the trip, pilgrims will attend the first performance of an Oratorio written by Cormac O’Duffy, which will be performed by Christians from the main denominational churches in Derry as part of a Praise Service...and to join in a service of Reconciliation.

Cormac O’Duffy sees the trip as a direct follow up of the Birmingham Leaders Conference in October last year, when the importance of direct action, showing repentance and forgiveness for England’s role in the problems of Ireland was stressed. It has been said he commented that until England repents for its historical involvement in the Irish troubles, peace will not come to Ireland.’

The place of repentance for the past is an important component in the healing ministry, which many charismatics have emphasised in recent years: see especially: *Healing Wounded History* (Parker: 2001)

Taize is mentioned as an ecumenical monastic community. There is also a mention for the evangelical preacher and founder of the Sojourners Community in Washington DC, Jim Wallis.

'New Wine' is a small group of young Catholic charismatics. (not the large interdenominational charismatic teaching celebration of the same name which normally takes place at Easter). The testimonies are interesting evidence of ecumenical contact:

A BBC employee in his mid-20s 'used to be an evangelical Anglican and joined New Wine about a year ago.' He says, "I knew I was going to join the Roman Catholic Church shortly and I wanted somewhere to worship where the Lord was praised and worshipped." "I really feel this is where the Lord wants me to be. I feel He has a plan for New Wine and it is very exciting to be part of it."

Another youth, unemployed for 18 months said: "I felt a need to come to New Wine because it was a mixture of Pentecostalism and Catholicism, and I could see the gifts of the Spirit flowing here. I could also fellowship with people of my own age group and receive the love and strength to go out and face a non-christian environment. The Lord has done a real healing work in me through coming here."

Another 25 year old, employed in computers said: "I came into Charismatic Renewal a few months before coming here through contact with Non-Catholics. My mother who was in Lourdes round about the same time heard about the Westminster prayer group (New Wine) and it was then I realised that the Roman Catholic Church had this Pentecostal dimension too. I feel very fortunate to have met other Catholics who have the same kind of spirituality that I do as we strengthen each other in our faith. I feel very strongly that charismatic Renewal is normal Christianity and it upsets me greatly that ordinary Catholic parishes reject it so much and seem so disinterested in their faith".

There is no hint in these three testimonies that the young men concerned wish to cease being Catholics.

The House of the Open Door Community: described as having grown out of Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church. The community is described as being 70% Roman Catholic and each Sunday goes to supply the music ministry for the chapel at Heathrow airport, as well as having a community Mass on Mondays. (1986). Yet the foundation of the community begins with what sounds effectively like an evangelical conversion of its founder Roy Hendy when coming into contact with an early charismatic group: The Fisherfolk, the musical outreach of the Community of Celebration.

'We realised that although we went to mass we didn't have Christ in our hearts. He wasn't real to us. So one evening we just knelt down in our sitting room and asked Jesus to come into our lives. He did and ever since, Jesus has been the centre and focal point of our lives.'



Here again is an interesting acknowledgement of the root catalyst of spiritual beginning from a source outside the Catholic Church. Yet the beneficiaries remain Catholic with an ecumenical outlook. In the Spring of 2004, I visited this community near Evesham, England. It is a welcoming community where one senses that the members have a real call into it both individually and corporately. It has very much a Catholic 'centre of gravity' and sees the local RC priest as the key visitor. Yet it is profoundly ecumenical and international in its make-up. A locally drawn up vision statement for the community contains the sentences: 'To work for harmony and unity in the body, acknowledging that all denominations are part of Christ's body on earth. To build an apostolate and discipleship group, *rather than just making converts.*' (emphasis mine)

ACTS 86 (July 1986) is mentioned as an 'ecumenical' conference in *Good News*. It was a major European evangelistic/charismatic conference held in Birmingham, England. The original vision for it was given by the Anglican, David Watson. David had died by the time the conference took place, but it brought together an ecumenical gathering of some 7,000 people including many Catholics. The New English Orchestra is also mentioned as an 'ecumenical' Orchestra of committed Christians. 'Committed Christian' is not a phrase of Catholic pedigree, but its mention here in *Good News* is evidence of the acceptance of a wider range of terms among Catholic charismatics.

Mention is made of Father **Ian Petit** in the ecumenical context of Winchester Renewal Group:

Ann and David Vinnell from Winchester said that Fr. Petit's visit had been a great boost to ecumenical relations, and they had been thanked by the other Churches for not keeping him to themselves. They commented, "Father Ian drew us closer together with good news and encouraged us to step out in faith and unity from the security of our churches and share the truths of our various traditions in the power of the Holy Spirit."

These eight examples are typical of the ecumenical outlook of the editorship, which runs through all of the earlier *Good News* copies that I read. As has already been pointed out these examples are from 1986. The weight of evidence points to a definite ecumenical awareness, outlook and praxis on the part of the catholic laity as far as the ministry of *Good News* is concerned.

## Appendix 5

### The Porvoo Declaration

The PORVOO Agreement brought into communion a number of The British and Irish Anglican Churches and The Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches in 1993 and 1994. The key shift in concept in the Porvoo Agreement was the broadening of the understanding of the term ‘episcopacy’ and ‘apostolic’.

We, the Church of Denmark, the Church of England, the Estonian Evangelical-Lutheran Church, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Iceland, the Church of Ireland, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Latvia, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Lithuania, the Church of Norway, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Church of Sweden and the Church in Wales, on the basis of our common understanding of the nature and purpose of the Church, fundamental agreement in faith and our agreement on episcopacy in the service of the apostolicity of the Church, contained in Chapters II-IV of the *Porvoo Common Statement*, make the following acknowledgements and commitments:

- (i) we acknowledge one another’s churches as churches belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and truly participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God;
  - (ii) we acknowledge that in all our churches the Word of God is authentically preached, and the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist are duly administered;
  - (iii) we acknowledge that all our churches share in the common confession of the apostolic faith;
  - (iv) we acknowledge that one another’s ordained ministries are given by God as instruments of his grace and as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also Christ’s commission through his body, the Church;
  - (v) we acknowledge that personal, collegial and communal oversight (episcopate) is embodied and exercised in all our churches in a variety of forms, in continuity of apostolic life, mission and ministry;
  - (vi) we acknowledge that the episcopal office is valued and maintained in all our churches as a visible sign expressing and serving the Church’s unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission and ministry.
- B
- (i) to share a common life in mission and service, to pray for and with one another, and to share resources;
  - (ii) to welcome one another’s members to receive sacramental and other pastoral ministrations;
  - (iii) to regard baptised members of all our churches as members of our own;
  - (iv) to welcome diaspora congregations into the life of the indigenous churches, to their mutual enrichment;
  - (v) to welcome persons episcopally ordained in any of our churches to the office of bishop, priest or deacon to service, by invitation and in accordance with any regulations which may from time to time be in force, in that ministry in the receiving church without re-ordination;
  - (vi) to invite one another’s bishops normally to participate in laying on of

hands at the ordination of bishops as a sign of the unity and continuity of the Church;

- (vii) to work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry;
- (viii) to establish appropriate forms of collegial and conciliar consultation on significant matters of faith and order, life and work;
- (ix) to encourage consultations of representatives of our churches, and to facilitate learning and exchange of ideas and information in theological and pastoral matters;
- (x) to establish a contact group to nurture our growth in communion and to co-ordinate the implementation of this agreement.

## Appendix 6

### Material from the Orthodox Churches

As this study proceeded, the presence of Orthodoxy gradually came into view. I was aware long before I started to gather material for chapter 5 that certain of the early charismatic leaders had migrated towards the Orthodox church, out of their own honest conviction. In the thesis the question naturally arose of a fuller study of the Orthodox and ecumenism. It was decided that the topic needed a more comprehensive study than was possible in this thesis. Nevertheless, I include four small pieces here. The first is part of Andrew Walker's testimony. The second is a short comment on an earlier attempt at Catholic-Orthodox rapprochement in 1439. The third is a comment upon the Orthodox Reactions to the Canberra Assembly. The fourth piece was originally part of the main text of the thesis, which was removed on grounds of length.

1. From Andrew Walker: *Charismatic Renewal, the Search for a Theology*, (Smail, Walker and Wright 1993.). '1971 was also the year that I encountered for the first time the charismatic renewal movement. I soon discovered that a charismatic was a middle-class Pentecostal (a conviction that remains with me still). It was strange for me, as an ex-Elimate, to find the Pentecostal experience at large in the mainstream churches. I sought out some Catholic charismatics who were my neighbours in south-west London. They were graciously accepting of me – caught as I was in a denominational no-man's-land and their friendship did much to lessen my prejudice against Roman Catholics. I was more amused than bemused to find them speaking in tongues and praying over each other, yet without any of the pious trappings of my childhood. They drank alcohol and smoked (and sometimes even swore) and refused to take themselves too seriously...Despite the mixed blessings of the Roman Catholic renewal, I already knew in 1971 that I was beginning to turn towards Catholicism, or at least sacramentalism. But I found Roman Catholic liturgy alien to me and I felt that the papal claims were unconvincing in the light of my studies of early church history. I had already read Timothy Ware's 'The Orthodox Church', and was fascinated to have stumbled across a tradition that was curiously both mystical and yet down to earth. And then one night on television I saw Archbishop Anthony Bloom...'

2. A comment from Raniero Cantalamessa (1991) on an earlier attempt at Catholic-Orthodox re-union:

'Yet, on its own, the way of official ecumenism will never achieve true Christian unity, and if it were to achieve it, it would only be a short-lived unity. This happened between Catholics and Orthodox brethren at the Council of Florence in 1439. Bishops and theologians sanctioned the re-union of both churches. They signed decrees, they declared the division ended. But minds had not been prepared, bitterness and resentments were still unresolved. The unity remained on paper; actually the situation deteriorated.'

3. The Orthodox delegates at Canberra 1991 were concerned about the tendency to broaden the aims of the WCC in the direction of *relations with other religions*

(emphasis theirs). Although at first sight it sounds very much like the Orthodox reciting their traditional propositional approach to faith, there is a significant paragraph on their understanding of the term 'Spirit' (see 'Reactions to the WCC Canberra Assembly: Reflections of Orthodox Participants' in **Unity Digest** Council for Christian Unity of General Synod. July 1991)

...they observe that some people tend to affirm with very great ease the presence of the Holy Spirit in many movements and developments without discernment. The Orthodox wish to stress the factor of sin and error, which exists in every human action, and separate the Holy Spirit from these. We must guard against a tendency to 'substitute a *private* spirit, the spirit of the world or other spirits for the Holy Spirit' (emphasis in original) who proceeds from the Father and rests in the Son. Our tradition is rich in respect for local and national cultures, but we find it impossible to invoke the spirits of *earth, air, water and sea creature* (emphasis in original. This was a specific reference to the Korean delegate's address) Pneumatology is inseparable from Christology or from the doctrine of the Holy Trinity confessed by the Church on the basis of Divine Revelation.'

#### 4. Extracted from main text:

'Living as I now do in Greece, it is impossible not to notice the pervasive influence of the Greek Orthodox Church in the history and culture of the state. To live in a land where the Roman Catholic Church is very much in a minority situation, and the Anglican Church even less so, is to appreciate quickly that local ecumenical dialogue of any kind is between greatly unequal partners. A recent column in the *Athens News* of 10<sup>th</sup> June 2005 :17. (weekly English Language newspaper) entitled: 'Healing Christian rift is still a distant glimmer', lay journalist, Brian Murphy, writing post the enthronement of Pope Benedict XVI, outlines the mega scope of the still existing divide between Orthodoxy and Catholicism. In a fairly full factual round up of recent dialogue and ecclesiastical contacts he comes back to the core issue of the relative power of the papacy in contrast to the Orthodox tradition of autonomous leadership. Quoting Anton Vrame, director of the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute in Berkeley, California:

'Can Rome devise a new way of primacy that does not lead to dominance over any other churches? That is the question only Benedict and Vatican can answer.'

Murphy adds: 'A World Council of Churches conference last month outside Athens – bringing together clerics and scholars from nearly every Christian denomination, demonstrated the sensitivities. The head of the Greek Orthodox Church, Archbishop Christodoulos, welcomed more than 700 delegates with a call for greater contacts among Christians. But he added some direct swipes against the West – a-point-by-point litany of past and present wounds felt by most Orthodox.'

Interestingly Professor Allan Anderson of Birmingham University attended that same WCC Conference and described the opening plenary address by the Primate of the Church of Greece (Christodoulos) as a 'remarkable spectacle' and 'in a most conciliatory fashion.' 'The symbolism of an ecumenical, an Orthodox, an evangelical and a Pentecostal leader sharing the same platform was not lost.'(2005)

In his recent paper Anderson placed the conference in the midst of an attempt by the WCC to bring Pentecostals and ecumenists together. As outlined in chapter 3 (above) there had been mixed reactions to the WCC general Assembly at Canberra in 1991 when although the theme had been 'Come Holy Spirit, Renew the Whole Creation' there had been a controversial invoking of spirits. Anderson refers in his paper to a Chilean Pentecostal delegate at Athens who in an informal session jokingly referred to Canberra 1991 saying that the Holy Spirit had been talked about but not 'invited.' Anderson asserts that in his opinion the Spirit was certainly invited to Athens 2005. The Orthodox too had had mixed feelings about Canberra, but this time Anderson refers to the very positive attitudes of the Orthodox contributions. In particular, Anderson notes the significant contribution of Greek Orthodox theologian, Petros Vassiliadis, who said that there were more convergences between Pentecostal and Orthodox theology than there were differences.

Reading from Anderson's paper one obtains a clear impression that the 14 years from Canberra to Athens demonstrates a deepening convergence of Pentecostal and Ecumenical. The issue of to what extent the Orthodox Church has experienced, or even sought, its own charismatic renewal, lies outside this thesis, but surely merits further work. The relevance of such a renewal is obvious.'

(see also the recent Cyprus statement, 'The Church of the Triune God' (2007) on Anglican-Orthodox relations)

## Appendix 7 Roman Catholic fieldwork

### 7a: Pilot fieldwork questionnaire:

It seemed an obvious part of the methodology of this thesis to conduct a pilot questionnaire among key people. This was embarked upon when *Good News* published a list (with photographs) of the membership of the four national service committees, fifty-two persons in total. The questions were distributed via the leaders in the four nations, expecting a good response. Initially only six replies were received, which was rather a surprise given that these were key people in leadership! Because this was clearly an inadequate response for the present purpose, I started the task of following up the questionnaires with personal telephone calls with the intention of visits. However, almost simultaneously, Good News circulated notice of the forthcoming Newman Consultation and included its own questionnaire, which was similar in style to my own and with overlapping questions. Having sighted the Newman questionnaire I decided that further work following up my own was now redundant, and decided to wait for the outcome of the consultation. The detailed analysis of the Newman questionnaire responses (over 1000) has not yet been published (March 2006). Although nothing of statistical substance could be drawn from this pilot questionnaire, it seems beyond reasonable doubt from the descriptive language used, that the Charismatic Renewal that Catholics talk about is one in kind with the Charismatic Renewal that other denominations talk about.

The questions are listed below. They were also used as a basis for the interviews in appendix 7b. The reply from Bishop Ambrose Griffiths is discussed in the main text.

How did you personally come into contact with charismatic renewal?

In what ways has it changed your spirituality?

In which areas of the Roman Catholic Church has thirty five years of Catholic charismatic renewal presented a significant challenge?

In your opinion, is Catholic charismatic renewal in your country: growing, plateauing, or in decline: Please comment.

What, in your opinion, seem to be the main factors sustaining and promoting Catholic charismatic renewal? (e.g. *Good News* Magazine, support from Papal documents, Vatican II stance, leadership from priests, National Service Committees, Renewal Networks and Gatherings).

Are there any particular cultural factors which impinge upon the course of CCR in your country (i.e. say Wales in contract to England).

What contact(s) do you have with charismatics from other Christian denominations? How important are they to you?

The 'fullness of the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church, subsists in the Roman Catholic Church'. Do you agree?

What in your opinion needs to happen for the churches to progress to visible unity?

Would you agree that charismatic renewal is an 'ecumenical motivator'.

## **7b Interviews with Roman Catholic Charismatics**

**Canon John Moran**, Vicar General of the Archdiocese, had become aware of charismatic renewal in the early 1970's through reading; and the support of the Vatican II Council for charismatic renewal; was significant for him. It made it 'ok.' for Catholics. Although he claimed his spiritual life seemed to be at low ebb and prayer groups put him off, he eventually drove 40 miles each week for some weeks to attend such a catholic renewal group. He was prayed over and saw this as a 'turning point' rather than as 'baptism in the Holy Spirit'. He started using 'tongues' and began to meet with others, *including several from other denominations*. He noticed that his preaching changed. He moved from overuse of notes to more trust in the Spirit and felt that his preaching was more effective. He began to influence his parishes charismatically and started to attend two things, which seem to be key to catholic charismatics, viz. Days of Renewal and Life in the Spirit Seminars. Moran confessed that he had cooled somewhat from his earlier charismatic enthusiasm, but that it had definitely had a positive influence on his spirituality. He felt that CCR had declined somewhat since its earlier days and prayer groups were smaller, but that it had been an important movement in the church and had broken down barriers. It was important to keep the movement going. Now however, he felt he personally needed to exercise caution as he was a member of the archdiocesan hierarchy, not so much in owning (or conversely hiding) his charismatic involvement as in attempting to pass it on.

I asked him specifically how he saw 'Baptism in the Spirit' in relation to water baptism and confirmation. It was clear that for him that initiatory catholic theology of water baptism remained intact and unchallenged by the Spirit-Baptism experience. The grace of baptism in water and confirmation became alive. They were 'fanned into flame', but there was no doubt of their abiding reality. Charismatic renewal had greatly enlightened the using of the breviary and if one read the lives of the Saints there was evidence of similar experiences there. Asked about Mariology, John replied that renewal seemed to heighten the person of Mary as an example of the most Spirit-filled Christian. (O'Neill has: 'CCR approaches Mary in the spirit of Vatican II as the original Spirit-filled person, not as a separate person on a par with the Spirit of God.' (1978:36). In closing, John hinted at his conviction that charismatic renewal has the possibility of being a revealer of truth, not in the sense of revealing new truth, as it were another gospel, but in giving a deeper understanding of the deposit of salvation, which the church has been given.

He stressed the importance of dialogue and cited the most recent example of the Lutheran /Catholic statement on justification, mentioning the important work of Hans-Kung *Justification*.



**Father Peter Rosser** came into charismatic renewal in the late 1970's. He was a RC Hospital Chaplain in Leeds and attended 'Life in the Spirit' seminars. He then attended a Francis MacNutt healing Conference see *Healing* (MacNutt 1974). A Benedictine Priest, Macnutt is one of the leading writers and practitioners on the Healing ministry from the Catholic Church, whose ministry is international and ecumenical.

Rosser became quietly involved in praying for the sick and healing. Another RC priest colleague with whom he worked prayed for him and became aware that as a baby some Romany Gypsies had told his fortune. The effect of this action had had a negative effect upon him and the prayer ministry had the effect of releasing him from this 'curse'. Rosser's faith then grew and 'gently fanned into flame.' He said that after his growth in charismatic renewal, praise and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament had a power which it 'doesn't have when we pray in a circle.' The connection between the Blessed Sacrament and Charismatic Renewal raised in my mind the issue of 'new revelation' and the methodology of leaving certain things in one's mental 'in-tray' pending future discussion. By listening to Rosser's own testimony and interpretation of a spiritual practice which was foreign to me as an Anglican Evangelical, was this an indication that some practices in Catholic devotion which Protestants might eschew was receiving a fresh imprimatur from the Spirit?

Rosser was eventually to form a healing prayer group for the hospital and it was joined by a Baptist couple, who came now and again to Sunday Mass, but felt a distinct call 'not to belong to our own particular (Baptist) community.' The ecumenical 'call' of the Baptist couple needs to be noted here and also that Rosser had no problem accepting them into the Mass centre; another sign that the Spirit might be doing some barrier breaking in new ways.

He was next moved to Halifax by his Bishop, where again a small prayer group was formed and experienced 'miracles far wider than healing.' There then came a most interesting call to South America and then a move back to Leeds. His concluding thoughts when asked about contemporary CCR were that CCR was 'going down' in Leeds Diocese and that he had found the last eleven years a struggle. There seemed to be 'nowhere to go to praise God. Are we to try and re-create the 70's? Where is the Lord leading us?' He also mentioned the ministries of Colin Urquhart (Anglican Vicar and leader of Roffey Place Renewal Centre in Sussex) and Merlin Carothers author of *Prison to Praise* (REF?). These latter remarks clearly indicated that renewal as far as Fr. Peter was concerned was changing shape. The former experiences seemed to have faded but there was a sensible resistance to going down the road of charismatic nostalgia. He spoke of the ministry of Fr. Tom Kenny in evangelisation, whom I had visited two days before, and some other charismatic RC priests involved in the ministry of healing. Clearly a degree of networking was important among catholic charismatics, as I discovered on my visit to Father Tom Kenny in Wakefield.

**Fr. Tom Kenny**, now in his 70s and ordained in 1954 is a RC Parish Priest with a lively church on the edge of Wakefield, South Yorkshire. 250 people attend Mass (He says 80 'aware of the Spirit'). There is a Praise worship group of 20, and healing services are held 4 to 6 times per year. He sensed a call to ministry as a young man and trained at Ushaw RC seminary near Durham. There was little teaching then on prayer and spirituality and the breviary was in Latin and of little use. In his words he was 'well trained in ecclesial matters.' In 1971, he became parish priest at Grimethorpe (of Colliery Band fame) and in the early 1970's organised a retreat, but was aware of his own spiritual dryness. In 1976 he attended Hawkeston Hall, a

Redemptorist House with the intention of proving that charismatic renewal was nonsense. The course was run by a community of sisters, from the Holy Child Convent, Harrogate. Fr. Jim McManus, well known as a healer in CCR circles was leading part of the course, and during the lectures Tom Kenny said 'help' to the Lord. Tom later used the word 'conversion' in the conversation and said that for him resurrection meant experiencing the living Jesus. Two physical results came from this period: he stopped stammering and he stopped smoking. He equated this period with 'Baptism in the Spirit' and said that a different 'me' emerged. His level of chaplaincy work was changed and he helped in ministry with young people. He also had much to say about evangelisation and the effect that *Alpha*, *Catholic Alpha* was having where it had been tried. (see below). He saw it as a 'powerful charismatic tool', mentioning Alpha Course conversions among the 'school gate mafia'; the mothers who came and chatted at the time of collecting children.

(Date of visit: August 2004) **Chris Scott**, a catholic layman in Birmingham Archdiocese, is the Midlands area Rep. in the CCR network. A 'cradle catholic,' he sees his role as local co-ordinator, and an answerer of enquiries. He encountered charismatic renewal through seeing his wife, son and daughter experience 'Spirit-baptism.' He recognised something special. He encountered a charismatic nun locally who established a prayer group and went through the 'Life in the Spirit' seminars in 1989-90. He felt a special devotion to Mary of Medjugorje (Bosnia/Hersogovina) and saw praying the rosary as important. Renewal came to him in his words: 'in little tit-bits.'

He expressed a real scepticism over the Toronto blessing which he felt 'over the top.' He cited Peter Hocken's visit to Toronto, where apparently Hocken was impressed with what he saw, but also saw Hocken as instrumental in bringing the fruits of Toronto into an 'RC renewal approach.' Scott now sees himself as 'gone off the boil', but his experience of renewal has primarily helped him to have a better understanding of what Christianity is.

I then asked about the overall effect of CCR on the denomination over 35 years. He saw it as positive for those who had embraced it. What was clear was the emergence of the laity and a breaking of the old priest – people mould of 'pay, pray, obey.' This was a significant new fact in the light of declining numbers of vocations and increasing numbers of immigrant priests. He saw renewal as the seeds of Vatican II growing. The Spirit of God is 'opening people up. There is a gradual change coming with the gifting of the Spirit of God to tell us how exciting God is and could be.'

In answer to my question about observed decline he saw not so much decline as 'cementing.' Renewal is now on more solid firm foundations. 'Renewal is about shoring up the foundations. Renewal must not get carried away with itself'; an interesting observation which can be interpreted in opposite senses. It can herald maturity, but may also mean a loss of momentum and the institutionalising of renewal. He then added that 'we must remember those just coming in.' CS then referred to Pope John Paul II comments in Rome in 1998, who when referring to Pentecostal spirituality urged RC Charismatics to 'stay onboard.'

In response to whether RCs see other Christian denominations as having something missing, CS replied 'Jesus in a special way' and clearly referred to the eucharist. However, predictably exclusive that response might appear he added that there was only one priest, Jesus, and referred me to the Epistle to the Hebrews. He further

added that he had seen charisms and healings at Lourdes associated with the Blessed Sacrament rather than Mary (cf Rosser – above). ‘Catholics don’t deify Mary’, he added. CS also saw prophecy as extremely important as God speaking back. He saw ecumenism as being about the greatest gift of love. If we seek visible unity we must define the church first. ‘Who is Jesus?, Who is the Spirit?’ ‘We are back to Alpha.’ He recognised the significance of diversity in unity by referring to the variety of the Catholic church itself: citing the Maronite Church, the Chaldean Church in Iraq, and an RC church wedding in Holland where the priest was in smart casual dress to conduct the ceremony. ‘To be in renewal one must have one’s feet on the ground.’ Scott then added an interesting comment upon the interfaith dimension: ‘People in the mosque don’t like ‘Abba’, father.’ I felt that Scott displayed a great modesty and although in his own words he had ‘gone off the boil’, something had clearly gone in over the years and his enthusiasm remained in a more matured approach. I have a sense that there may exist many like him, not only in the Catholic church, but spread throughout the churches: still ‘charismatic’ and holding onto many of their initial convictions, but somehow awaiting new directions.

(Date of visit: August 2004) **Fr. David Keniry** was a name given to me when I first started to make enquiries within Birmingham Archdiocese in 2002. He now runs a diocesan centre for evangelisation in Coventry. (The Ark of the Covenant). He has clearly come to a mature, thought-through position on Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church. He saw Baptism in the Spirit as the key catalyst and was firm in his conviction that institution and charism were co-essential. He mentioned Cardinal Suenens’ seminal contribution at Vatican II in which he affirmed that the charismatic dimension was one of the constitutive elements of the Catholic Church. Section 12 of *Lumen Gentium* was significant on charisms. Previously he believes the charisms were subsumed in the rite of anointing of the sick. By comparison it is interesting to note that the healing/anointing gift for the sick in the Church of England 1662 Prayer Book Rite, is in the rite for anointing. This has often been part of the argument that healing as a charism in the modern healing ministry is not a new invention, but rather a thing always there but now rediscovered.

Like Chris Scott (above) he referred to the comments of the Pope in 1998 encouraging charismatics to remain within the Catholic fold. ‘Sacrament and charism are co-essential for building the body.’ His comments on the new Catholic Baptism preparation course were interesting. Serious preparation is now the norm. ‘The days of just turning up are gone.’ He cited the work *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Evidence from the First Eight Centuries* of McDonnell and Montague (1991) as important. His overall view was that CR had been and is important; but that some people still have the view that it is peripheral, especially in Europe. It was important that Baptism in the Spirit led to personal spiritual growth and maturity rather than ‘fundamentalism’ (which he didn’t define). As for ecumenism: Keniry saw it as experiencing the Lordship of Christ together, adding that ‘we can only do in our generation what we are called to do. ..obeying the Spirit in our time.’

## **IRELAND: brief evidence.**

### **An anecdotal story from Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the 1970s in Southern Ireland.**

The following account arose in conversation with Mrs. Helen Anderson, who is married to an Anglican minister who served in a ministerial post near Cork (1995-2002). It is included here as it clearly suggests that further research around this area could be useful.

‘...people would often give us accounts of the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the days of the charismatic renewal in the early 1970’s. Very large groups of people, both Catholics and Protestants, would gather in church halls or schools to pray, and people would describe amazing experiences of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. *This was largely a movement among the laity.* (emphasis mine). Great unity was experienced among the different denominations, and the prayer groups continued for quite some time in an atmosphere of love and freedom. People who were involved told me that the presence of the Holy Spirit withdrew in most cases when the Roman Catholic hierarchy tried to control the meetings or bring them into a more traditional Catholic framework. For example, they would seek to combine the meetings with the Marian prayer groups, or bring in statues of Mary on special feast days. A specific Roman Catholic Renewal Group was set up, and some of the priests who were most involved with the Protestants were moved on or sent to the Missions. Catholics would tell us that the big mistake they made at the time of the Renewal was to retreat back into the Roman Catholic Church and to separate from the Protestants, because as they did so the power and presence of the Holy Spirit departed.’  
H. Anderson. April 2005.

O’Keefe (: 24) notes that in 1974 there were around 50 Catholic Charismatic Prayer Groups in Ireland which were also ecumenical in flavour. In Belfast in 1974 he mentions 30 groups which were Catholic-Protestant. There was also a cross border element in these groups.

## **7c.Two Catholic Charismatic Renewal Masses:**

### **London Day of Renewal on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2002**

From a wide choice of meetings on offer in *Good News*, I selected to attend the London Day of Renewal on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2002. It was held in an ecumenically interesting place, the Friends’ Meeting House in Euston Road and timed to begin at 1030. About a hundred or so had gathered in the large auditorium by 10:35 when a three- piece music group with overhead projector screen started a time of singing. One immediately felt at home and able to join in. The musical leadership was good, without an endless repetition of old choruses, but a variety of old and new songs, supplemented by some full blooded hymns. There was little in this opening session to indicate that this was a Roman Catholic meeting. During this musical time the numbers crept up to around 300 or so, and by the afternoon sessions around 500 were present.

At 1100 the singing stopped and we were given an official welcome, the notices and began the Mass. The Mass seemed to be primary and central and was quite similar in style to an Anglican Renewal Eucharist, with robed priests. The message was primarily a teaching/testimony about God’s growing of renewal in a local congregation in South London. With the extended intercessions and singing, the Mass lasted until lunchtime. It was obvious that for the vast majority of participants charismatic renewal in a Mass setting seemed a normal ‘seamless robe’ experience for them. There was reverence and adoration at the time of the sacramental distribution

and the participants could move effortlessly from genuflection to raising hands in worship with clapping.

During the lunch hour I was introduced to the catholic priest who had celebrated the Mass, who in turn introduced me to one or two other 'regular Anglicans.' He then took me into a backroom where the young man who was to lead the afternoon healing/ministry session was preparing his team. The young man preparing was not a priest, but a catholic layman, Damien Stayne, leader of the Cor Lumen Christi Community in Chertsey (near London) and the time of preparation seemed 'pure Wimber.' (John Wimber, founder of the Vineyard Churches in California, had a considerable effect upon the theology and style of charismatic healing practices in Britain from the mid 1980's onwards. It is possible to trace his influence in the *Alpha course*).

It was remarkable to see a younger catholic preparing a group of around twenty in how to pray and minister to the sick. He talked of waiting and listening, tongues and words of knowledge (which he expected to get and did) and gave great attention to practical detail. When the afternoon session started, there was no forced hype; and after a time of singing, Stayne spoke on healing-prayer and expectation. There were no histrionics in style and it was nearly an hour before he reached the time of prayer ministry. This commenced with a Wimber style of invocation of the Spirit 'to come.' There was no shortage of candidates for prayer and no 'Toronto style' falling on the carpet that I could see, but occasionally came ripples of laughter and rejoicing. It was all so reminiscent of some of the healing meetings I had attended in the 1990s, but the atmosphere of authenticity and encouragement was not in doubt.

### **Westminster Cathedral 19<sup>th</sup> November 2005.**

Coming shortly after the Newman Consultation, I attended the above event in the expectation that it would provide an up to date 'shop-window' for the current state of health of CCR. (The event had been advertised by a glossy flier in *Good News*.) There were two significant facts: (a) it was being held in the senior Catholic worship centre of England and (b) the Mass was being celebrated by the senior Catholic cleric of England. To have the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster lead a charismatic Mass is comparable to an Anglican Renewal Eucharist being led by the Archbishop of Canterbury or York. To have a senior cleric preside is a powerful symbol of acceptance of the charismatic movement within the denomination. It also models the unity of charism and institution for all to draw from in their local acts of worship. (Diocesan Renewal Eucharists in the Church of England usually had a Bishop or Archdeacon presiding. The speaker was usually an invited visitor actively involved in renewal. The intercessions were presented in novel ways, and there was usually a time of prayer ministry with the laying on of hands for healing).

On this Westminster occasion the worship songs were drawn from a range of denominational backgrounds. Anyone involved in renewal during the last twenty years would have recognised at least some of them. The same group provided the confessional music, gloria, agnus-dei, sanctus, eucharistic acclamation, a 'great amen', and music at the Peace.

I estimated the congregation at around two thousand; the vast majority seemed to be Catholic, but a survey of attendees' denominations would have been interesting. The Cardinal began with a prayer for renewal of baptismal vows and walked the length of the aisle sprinkling dedicated water over the worshippers. His address centred upon the individual's call in baptism; 'where we begin our journey in Christ?' and he

referred to the journey's destination in heaven, citing the example of Pope John Paul II who was now 'fulfilled.' The Holy Spirit was our leader and guide on the journey; and on that journey joy and sorrow intermingle. The Cardinal's preaching style was saintly, 'orthodox', pastorally encouraging and 'catholic.' It seemed well received, though had some other denominations' charismatics been present, they might have expected something more focused on charisms. What was obvious was that there was a care and acceptance of charismatics in the Catholic church by the Cardinal, and he certainly remained 'himself' throughout the service.

After the music group, it was the intercessions which gave the strongest clue that this was no ordinary Mass. They were led by the National Choir of CCR in England, Charles Whitehead, (see 2.4). After each bidding, there followed a corporate praying and some singing in tongues for about thirty seconds. This congregational activity was extremely moving and one had an unmistakable sense that these were the prayers of the people ascending. The tongues ended with 'Lord hear us; Lord Graciously hear us' and the charism of tongues beautifully blended back into the liturgical framework. What was particularly moving was the object of the intercessions: *a new Pentecost, an increase in charisms, and a new evangelisation throughout this land.* (emphasis mine). The sense of sincerity and expectation in these intercessions was almost palpable. The whole service seemed to carry the sense that it is the most natural thing for Catholics to be charismatics. Indeed, throughout the whole CCR there seems no trace of any sense that the Catholic Church is any thing other than Christ's Church.

(The Westminster service included a traditional invocation of the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary to 'pray for us sinners, now and in the hour of our death.'). Perhaps it was a significant pointer that as one left the Cathedral one was handed a leaflet inviting us to an International Catholic Charismatic gathering in Rome in June of 2006, plus a Pentecost vigil with Pope Benedict.)

## Appendix 8

### Indiscriminate Infant Baptism.

In this thesis, the phrase, ‘sacramentalised but not evangelised’ (see chapter 4.1) has focused one of the main problems of Christian initiation: the need to expect conversion and personal assent to faith when a candidate is old enough to profess it.

Fr. Pat Collins in a recent article: *Hope in the Midst of Apostasy*, refers to what he describes as mass apostasy in Western Europe:

Millions of baptised people are abandoning Christian beliefs and practices. The evidence is pretty obvious. Only a small minority attend church on a regular basis; Christian ethics, especially where human sexuality and business are concerned, are largely ignored. Seminaries are emptying and religious orders are dying. (Collins 2004 :4).

Suenens also raises the crucial question of the rightness of baptising large numbers of infants of whom, only a minority, later go on to adult faith. ‘In the early days of Christianity, adults were truly evangelised, but subsequently we entered an era when baptism was conferred on infants as soon as they were born. Society became nominally Christian, sociologically Christian. Thenceforth, Christianization was regarded as something already achieved, sustained by the whole social context, and passed on from generation to generation...certainly we have been sacramentalised! But have we been evangelised, christianised, as responsible adults? That is quite another matter.’ (1975:5,6).

Indeed, it has been known for decades that ‘sacramentalising’ a large proportion of the population near birth does not produce a Christian nation in a deeply meaningful sense. A considerable number of Anglican clergy recognise the barrier that an undemanding sociological infant baptismal practice can be to evangelism in adult life. Initially this phenomenon seeks a theological solution, but it has become increasingly

recognised that the problem is one of pastoral discipline, which the churches have within their own power to address.

A great deal of study and pastoral experimentation has gone on in this area for at least fifty years. We can see this in Bonhoeffer's essay on 'costly grace':

We gave away the word and sacraments wholesale, we baptised, confirmed, and absolved a whole nation unasked and without condition. Our humanitarian sentiment made us give that which was holy to the scornful and unbelieving. We poured forth unending streams of grace. But the call to follow Jesus in the narrow way was hardly ever heard. (1948 :13).

Yet his doctrine of baptism remains a high one:

As far as infant baptism is concerned, it must be insisted that the sacrament should be administered only where there is a firm faith present which remembers Christ's deed of salvation wrought for us once and for all. This can only happen in a living Christian community. To baptise infants without a Church, is not only an abuse of the sacrament, it betokens a disgusting frivolity in dealing with the souls of the children themselves. For baptism can never be repeated. (: 173).

The same issue in Church of England history, has caused upheavals in baptismal theology right back to the Reformation. The Gorham controversy of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century forced some deep thinking on the issue of baptismal regeneration:

...that baptism is a sacrament generally necessary to salvation, but that the grace of regeneration does not so necessarily accompany the act of baptism that regeneration invariably takes place in baptism. The grace may be granted before, in, or after baptism. Baptism is an effectual sign of grace, by which God works invisibly in us, but only in such as worthily receive it—in them alone it has a wholesome effect....in no case is baptism unconditional. (Nias 1951: 98)

This judgement, by a nineteenth century Anglican Consistory Court, has never been revoked, but it has certainly become forgotten. The liturgical language of the Church of England Confirmation service: *Alternative Service Book* (1980) still talks instrumentally of 'made them your children in the waters of baptism' and in the popular mind baptism (or more popularly 'christening') is still seen as conveying the 'thing', whatever that may be. Referring to the popular perceptions which at times border on the superstitious, raises the whole area of practical pastoral policy. Delaying baptism where there was no possibility of a child being reared as a Christian



is already an option for Roman Catholics. The case is not quite the same for Anglicans, where for generations those who have desired baptism for their offspring, whether they were regular church attendees or not, is regarded as one of the cluster of human rights. The 1922 doctrine commission included an interesting appendix on the question of the mechanism of baptismal effectuality. Part of it reads as follows:

...sacraments are 'effectual signs' - that is to say, that they do not merely symbolise the reception of grace, but are means by which the grace is received. ...there has been in Anglican Theology comparatively little exact discussion of the manner in which the sacraments are means of grace and can therefore be said to cause grace. In part this has been due to the extent to which the question has been confused by controversies and in particular, by exaggerated fears, in some quarters, lest any allowance of a real sacramental causality should involve the admission of magical conceptions and, in other quarters, lest any rationalising of such causality should minimise its reality.

*Doctrine in the Church of England* (1957:230)

The language here is dated and circumlocutory, but it is easy to detect the polarity just beneath the surface. Faith is not mentioned, but the tone of this extract suggests the kind of in depth theological dialogue that is needed before convergence in theology and practice really appears.

The challenge to the churches is to look again at the conditions under which people, especially infants, are baptised. David Keniry's comments on the new Catholic Baptism preparation course are timely: 'Serious preparation is now the norm. The days of just turning up are gone,' (see Appendix 7). Grasping the nettle of indiscriminate infant baptism is hard, but failure to grasp it effectively leaves the churches with an ongoing dilemma. It may be significant that most of those concerned and discussing baptismal reform in the 1980s would identify themselves personally with charismatic renewal.

BEM highlights the problem and its need to be tackled as an important ecumenical bridge to be crossed:

In order to overcome their differences, believer Baptists and those who practice infant baptism should reconsider certain aspects of their practices. The first may seek to

express more visibly the fact that children are placed under the protection of God's grace. The latter must guard themselves against the practice of apparently indiscriminate baptism and take more seriously their responsibility for the nurture of baptised children to mature commitment to Christ. (BEM:6 para C16).

The commentary (:7) refers this challenge specifically to many large European and North American majority churches, of which the Anglicans and Roman Catholics are quite significant. The quotation above, whilst it is an agreed statement, merely describes the area of the problem. It is not a solution and there remains much distance to travel before there is a complete mutual acceptance of different 'baptisms' on the part of different churches. Roger Godin introduced a motion to General Synod in 1987 based on the BEM statement quoted above. The challenge was to get the Synod to re-consider the Church of England's baptism policy and to bring it to a more discriminating and challenging position in the parishes. The ensuing debates and reports went on for several years before the Synod effectively ducked the harder line policy on infant baptism in the face of a more fulsome statement on baptism practice in the new liturgies (Common Worship). This left parishes to adopt whatever policy they preferred within broad limits.

Churches which still practice infant baptism, ought seriously to consider whether any baptism should be delayed until a child is old enough to be conscious of the rite, even if not able to answer for itself. Bronnert (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Wales 2000) proposes that baptism of a child, as opposed to an infant, should be offered to all who request it, but not before the age of 2 or 3 years. But the situation on the ground is changing significantly in the Church of England (2004) as the number of adult baptisms increases annually; and is paralleled by a steady decrease in infant-baptism.

It is worth re-iterating that BEM statements, whilst looked at from one direction are an encouraging mark of convergence, yet from another direction also highlight the

significant differences which still remain in practice. There is still much work to be done in this area and maybe a body such as the World Council Faith and Order could produce statements of practical baptismal policy which might have a chance of commanding wide ecumenical consent.

On a downbeat note, in the important ARCIC Report *The Gift of Authority*, there is blandness in the reference to baptism (para 49). 'In freely accepting the way of salvation offered through baptism, the Christian disciple also freely takes on the discipline of being a member of the body of Christ.' This unexciting blandness appears also in the introduction: 'a recognition that because of their baptism and their participation in the *sensus fidelium*, the laity play an integral part in decision making in the Church.' Such statements, whilst theologically 'politically correct', do little to address the pastoral challenge of indiscriminate infant baptism.

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